Mar. 21, 1994

THE NEW YORKER

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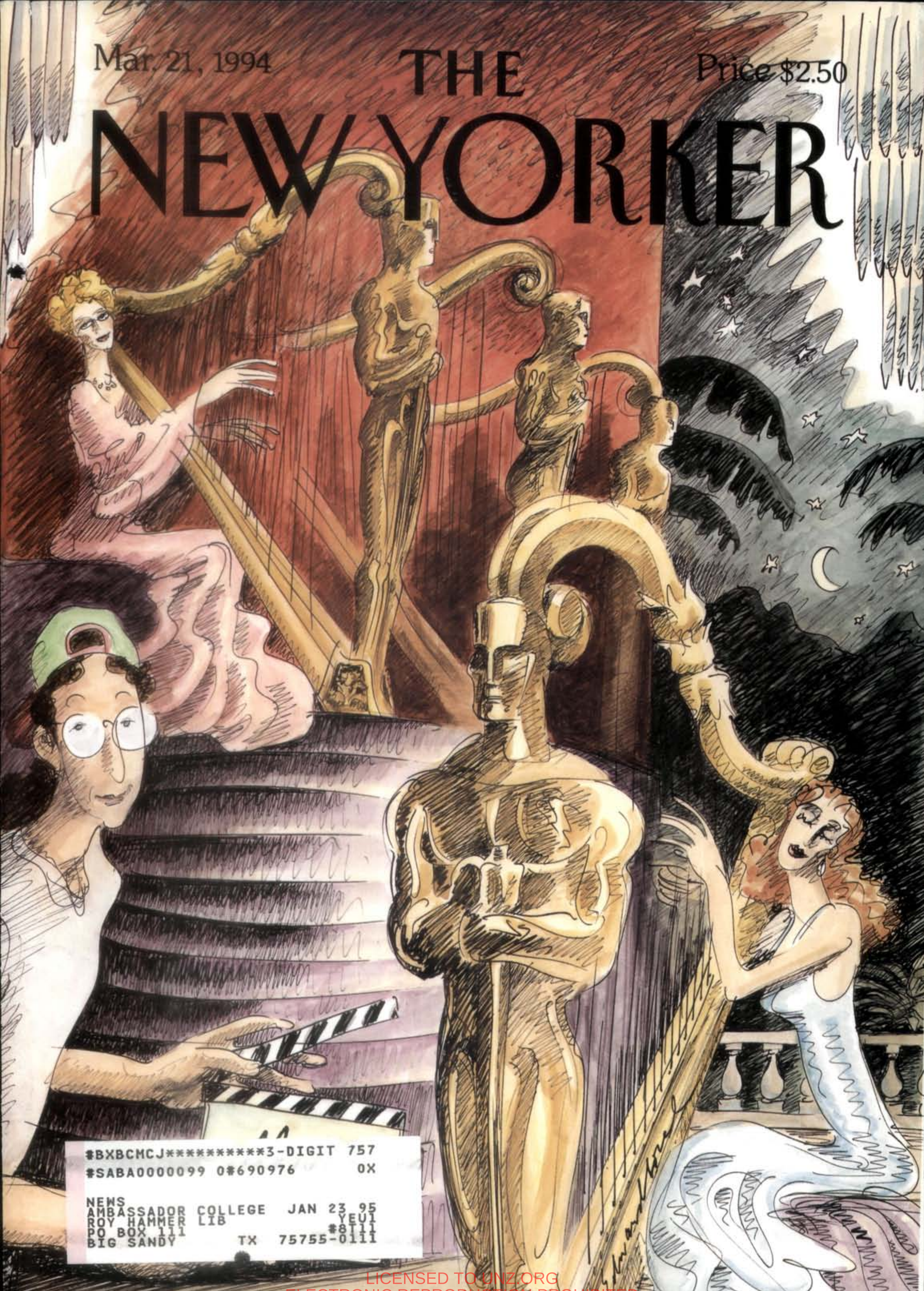

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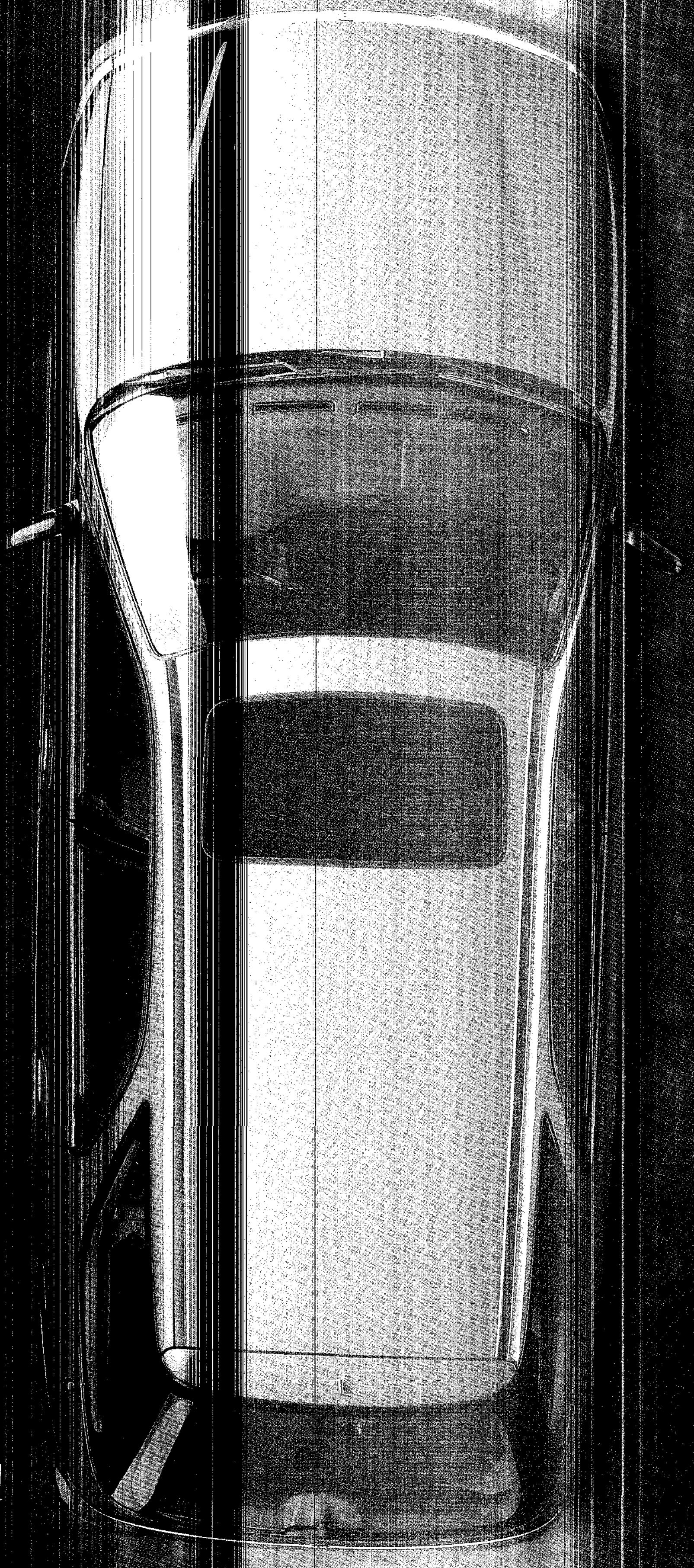
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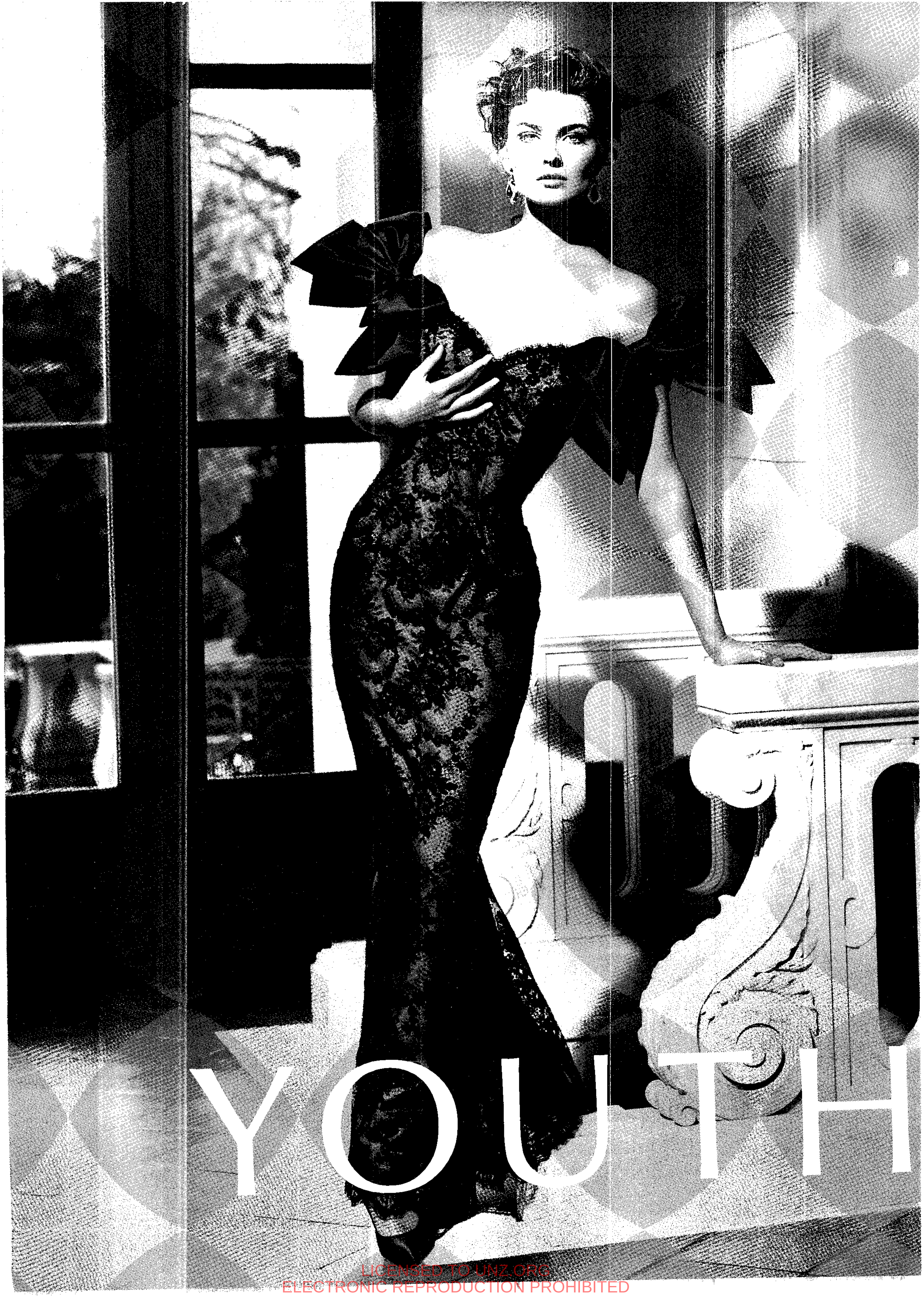
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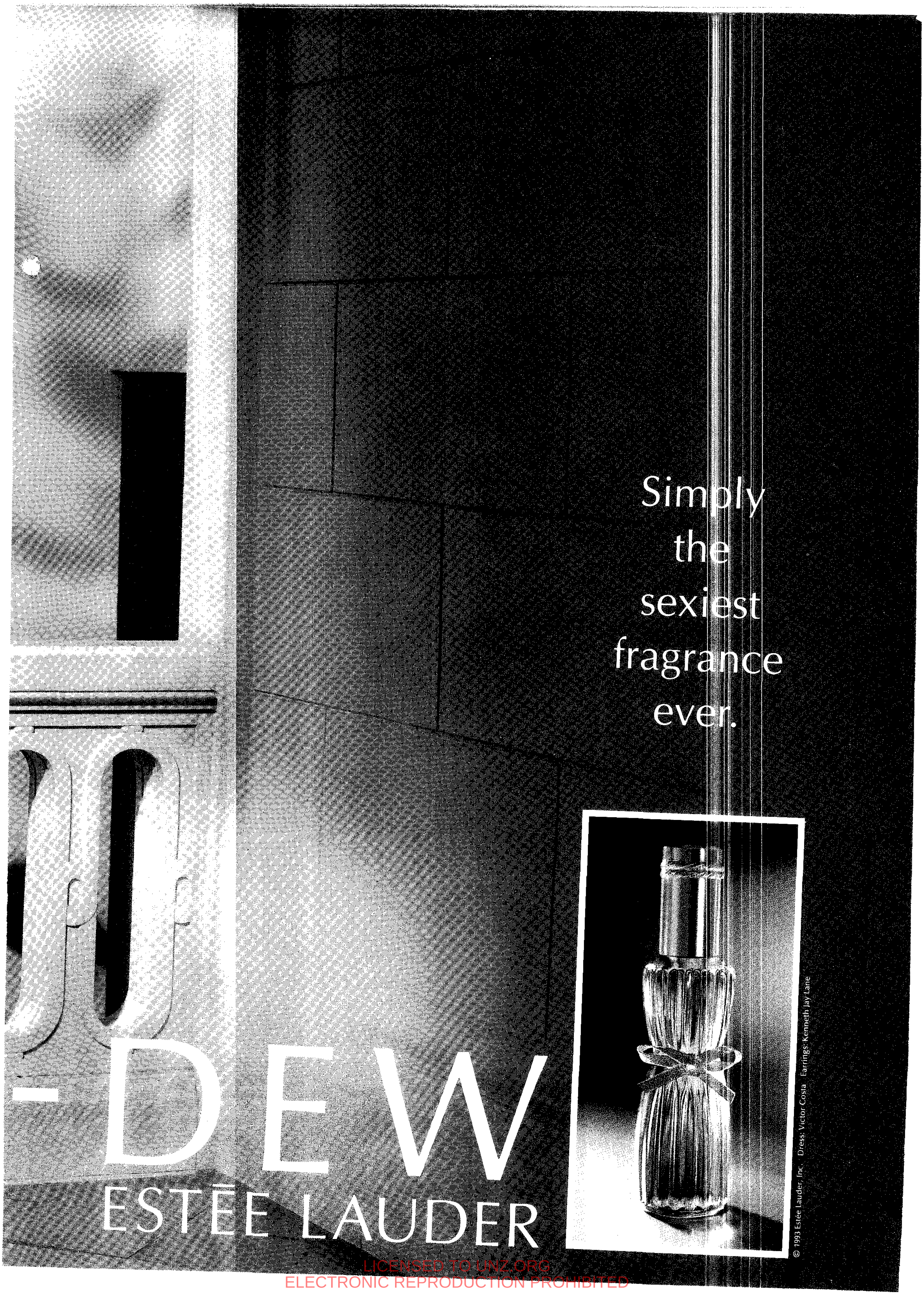
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THE NEW YORKER
GOES TO THE MOVIES

MARCH 21, 1994

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Robert Benchley helped launch the talkies, and *The New Yorker* has been hooked ever since.

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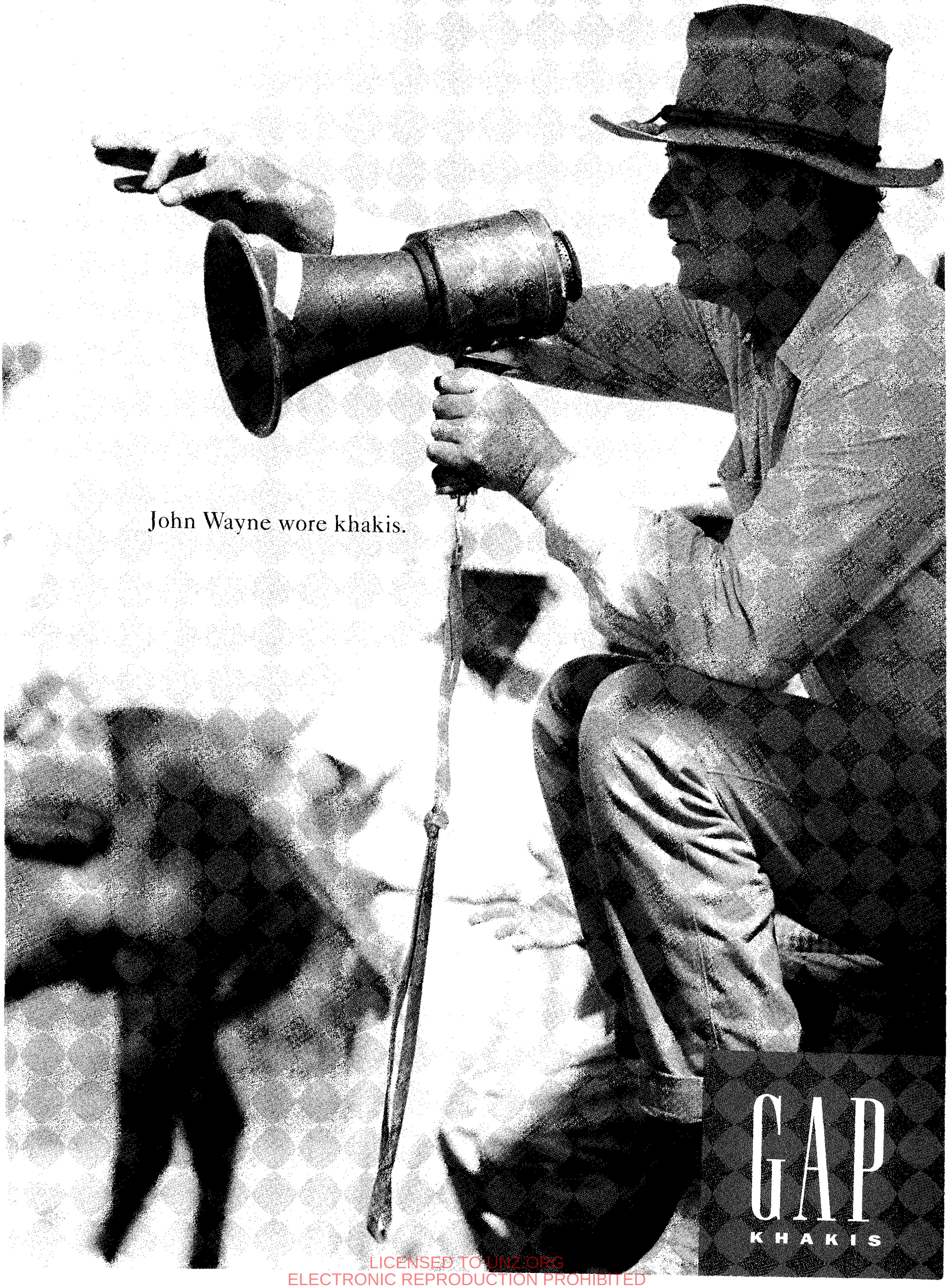
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Why do the stars still have a hold on us?

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the movies. But it wasn't always easy.

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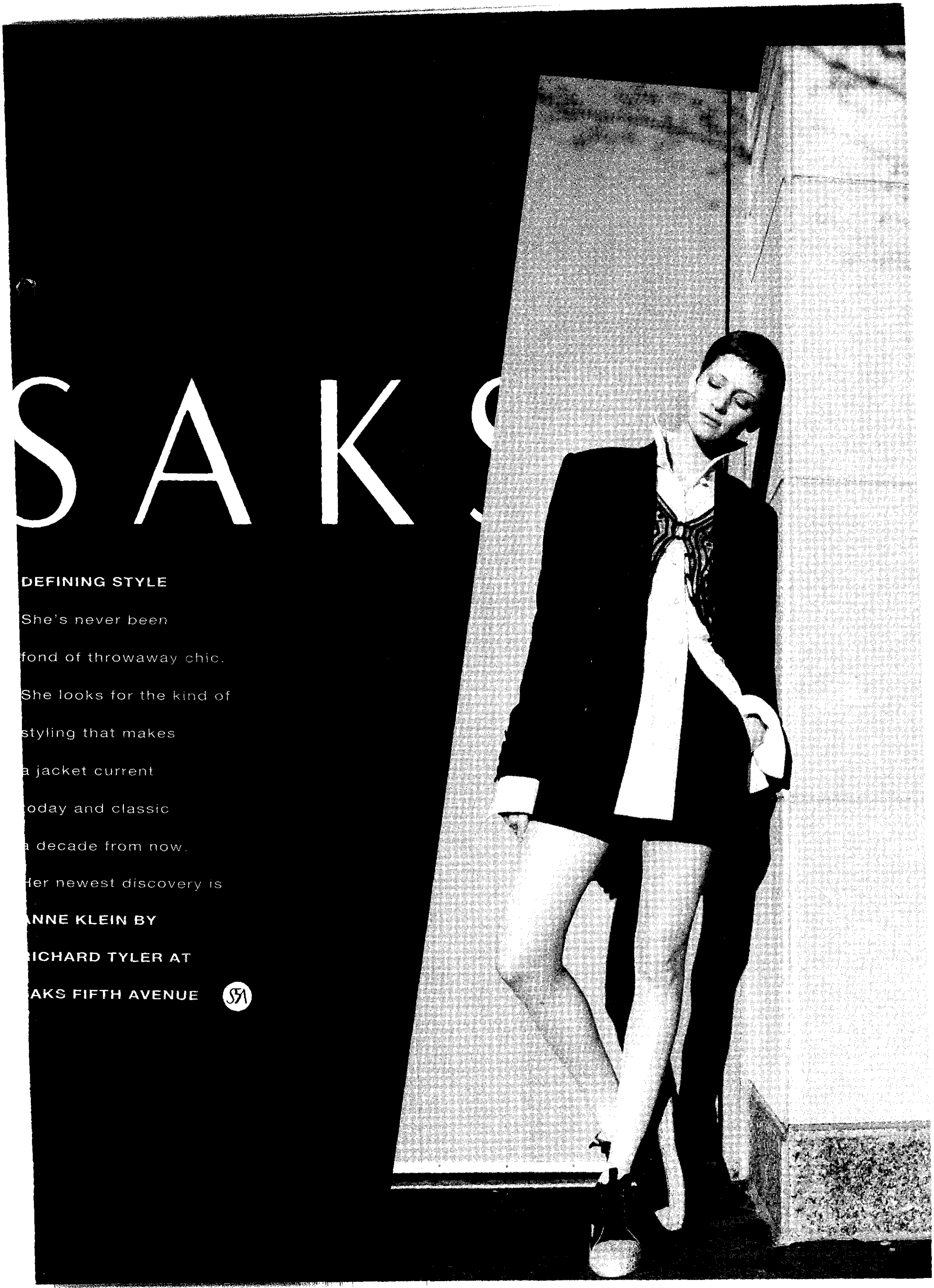

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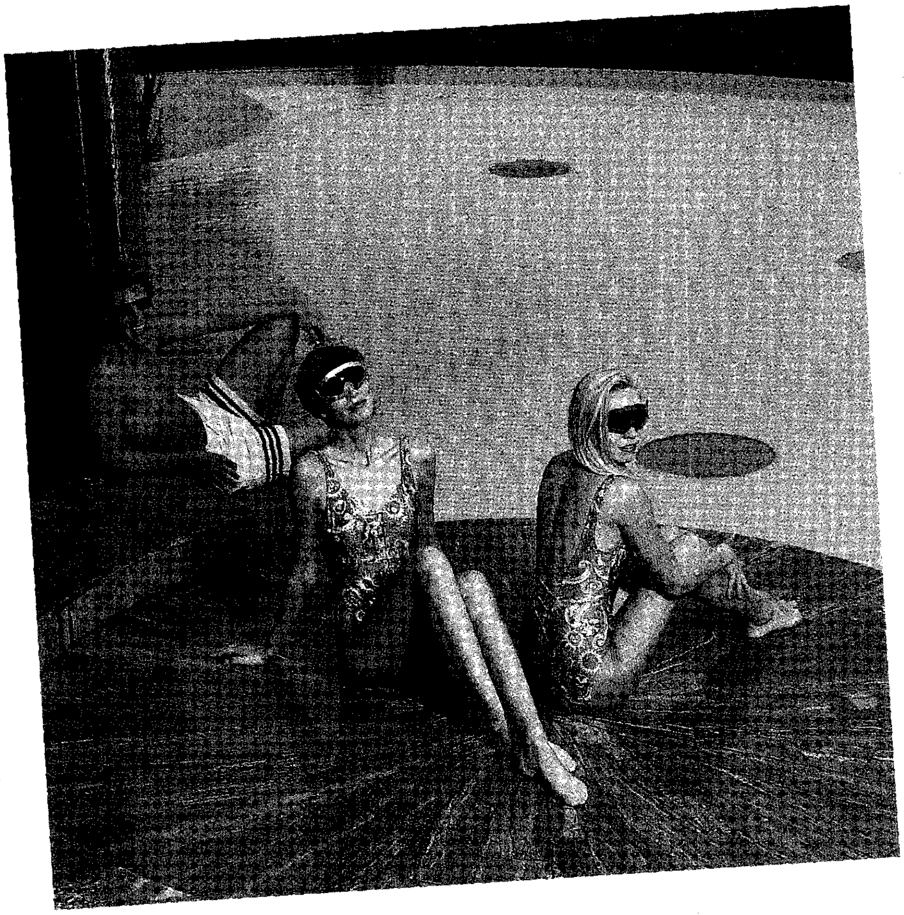

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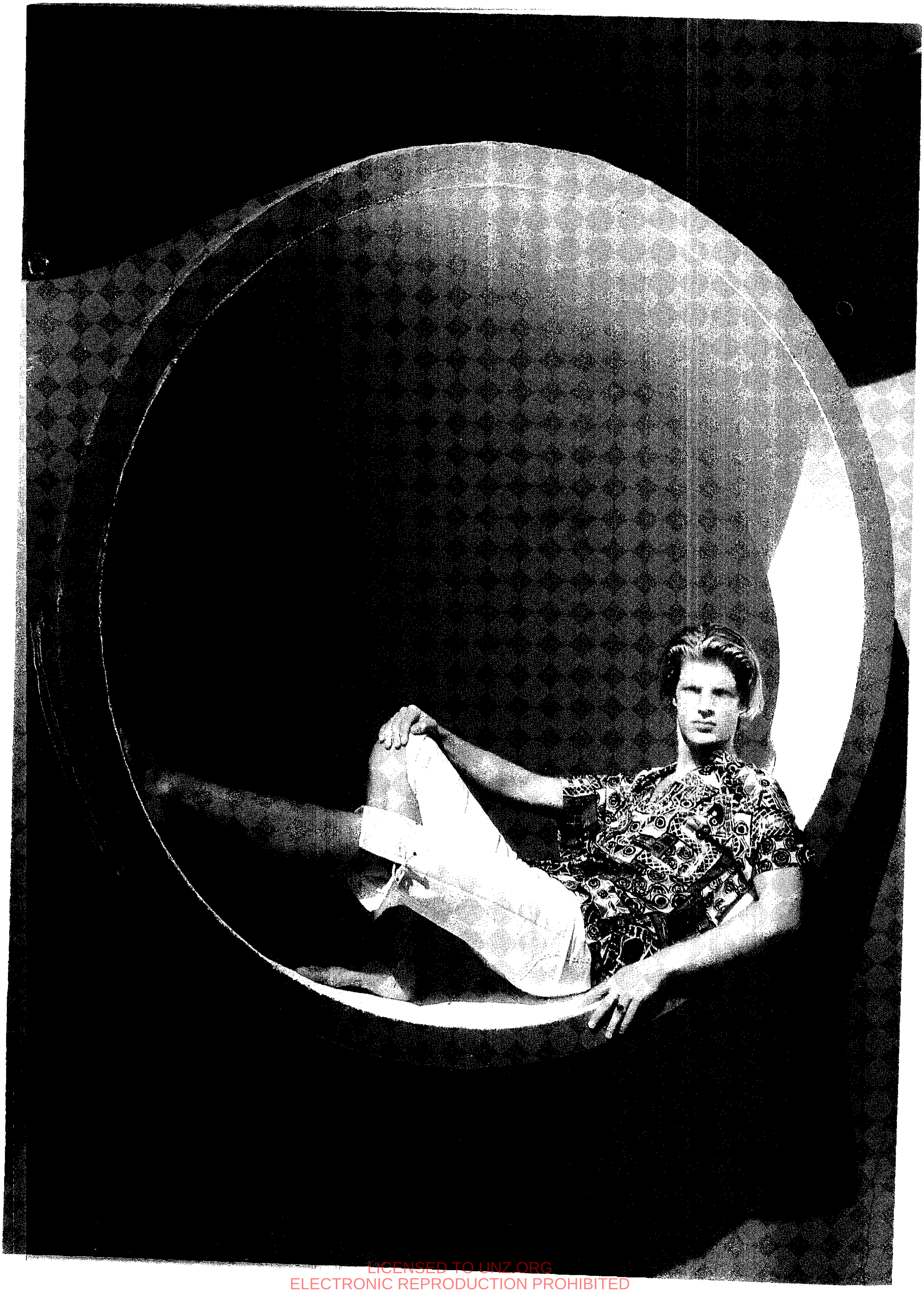

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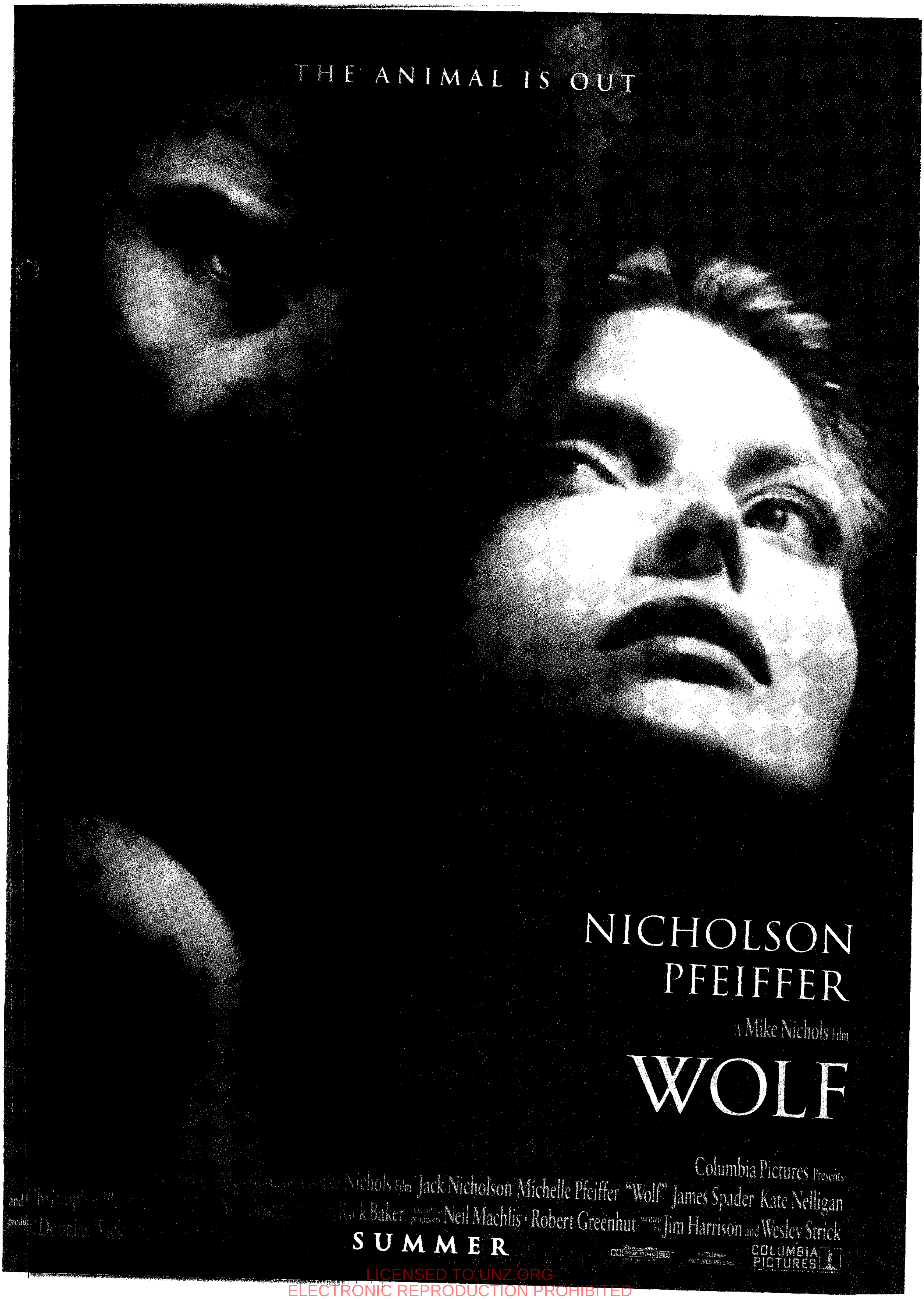
COMMENT

THE SCREENING OF AMERICA

THE NEW YORKER had barely cleared its throat when the movies found their voice. In 1928, three years into the magazine's life, Robert Benchley's wildly popular one-reeler "The Treasurer's Report" helped usher in the talkies, which opened new vistas not only for Hollywood but for writers at *The New Yorker*. This gave no joy to Harold Ross, the magazine's founder and editor, who shared the prevailing East Coast view of Hollywood as a suburb of what H. L. Mencken called Moronia. "Movies are for old ladies and fairies," Ross told Nunnally Johnson, who wanted to review them. In time, Ross reconciled himself to the upstart industry, even becoming a backer of Chasen's, a legendary Hollywood watering hole. Johnson, meanwhile, became one of Hollywood's most prolific screenwriters, with fifty-four screen credits, including "How to Marry a Millionaire" and "The Dirty Dozen." He heads a long list of *New Yorker* writers who shuttled between coasts to sell their wares to an industry that, having invested in the miracle of sound, now needed something to say.

Even an incomplete roll call of *New Yorker* writers and their movies bears witness to the magazine's entanglement with American film: Charles Brackett (twenty-seven screenwriting credits, including "Ninotchka" and the Academy Award-winning scripts for "Sunset Boulevard" and "The Lost Weekend"), Herman J. Mankiewicz (sixty-five credits, including "Citizen Kane"), S. J. Perelman (twelve, including "Horse Feathers" and "Monkey Business," and an Oscar for "Around the World in Eighty Days"), S. N. Behrman (twenty-five, including "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm"), Donald Ogden Stewart (thirty-one, including "The Philadelphia Story"), Daniel Fuchs (fourteen, including "Panic in the Streets"), Dorothy Parker (fourteen, including "A Star Is Born"), Russel Crouse (fifteen, including "Anything Goes"), John Collier (nine, including "Sylvia Scarlett"), Truman Capote (six, including "Beat the Devil"), Sally Benson (thirteen, including "Shadow of a Doubt"), Niven Busch, Jr., (twenty-five, including "The Postman Always Rings Twice"). The list of writ-

THE NEW YORKER, 20 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036. Thomas A. Florio, president and publisher; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human-resources director; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing; Peter Armour, vice-president and circulation director; Pamela Maffei McCarthy, vice-president and managing editor; Rhonda Pinzer Sherman, vice-president and director of promotion; Gary Van Dis, vice-president and corporate creative director; Maurie Perl, vice-president and director of public relations; Lance J. O. Ford, advertising director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1460, Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; Manager Media International, Ltd., 37 New Bond St., London W1Y 9HB, England; Penn Brown & Associates, 20 Park Plaza, Suite 446, Boston, Mass. 02116; The Media Company: 3525 Piedmont Road, N.E., Building 5-Suite 440, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; MPR: 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada M5E 1M2; Carol Orr & Co., 3500 Maple Ave., Suite 1060, Dallas, Tx. 75219; Catherine Billups & Co., Via Pinamonte Da Vimercate, No. 6, 20121 Milan, Italy. Steve Leece Media Ltd., Shun Pont Commercial Building, 5-11 Thomson Road, #12-B, Wanchai, Hong Kong. SLDM Pte. Ltd., 7500-A Beach Road, #06-323 The Plaza, 0719 Singapore, Republic of Singapore. THE NEW YORKER is not responsible for the return or loss of submissions, or for any damage or other injury to unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any submission of a manuscript or artwork must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size, bearing adequate return postage. The magazine does not consider unsolicited photographs or transparencies. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE: To inquire about a subscription or to change an address, please write to THE NEW YORKER, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322, or telephone 1 800 825-2510. For a change of address, subscribers should give four weeks notice. If possible, please send the address label from a recent issue. © 1994 by *The New Yorker* Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of THE NEW YORKER. The periodical's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are registered trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc., published through its division *The New Yorker* Magazine, Inc.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SUMMER

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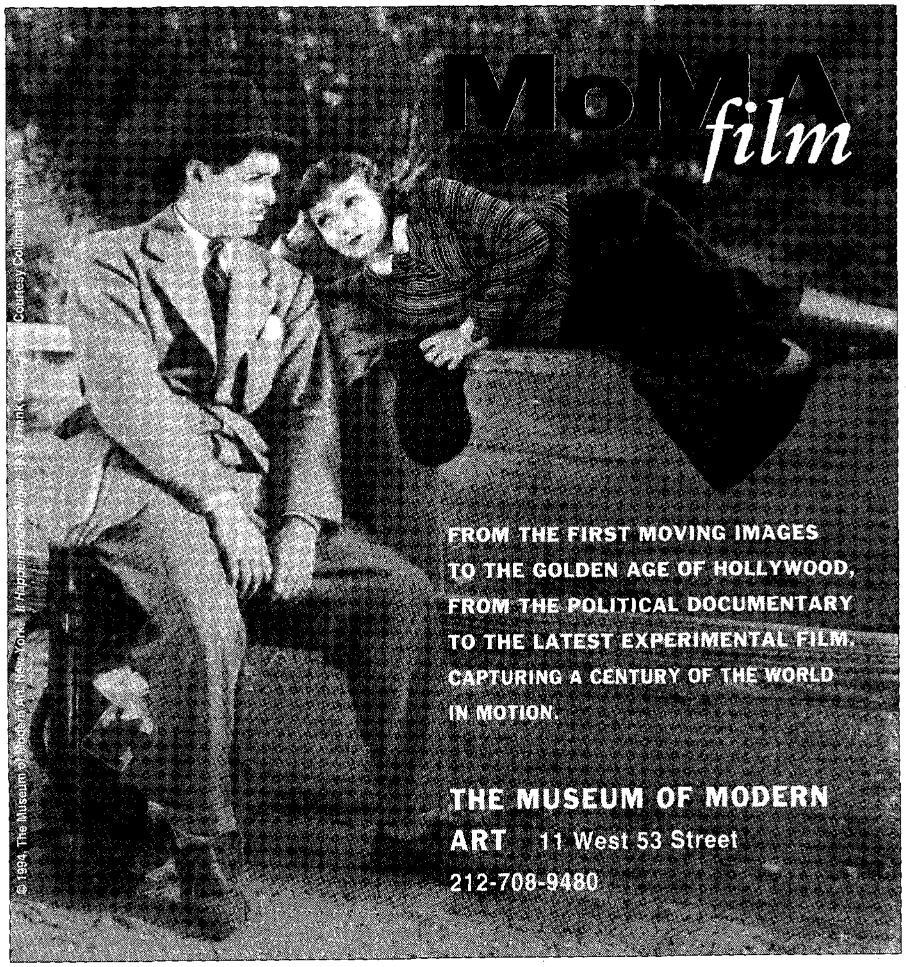
ers for this magazine whose work has been adapted to film includes many of the above, and also James M. Cain ("Double Indemnity," "The Postman Always Rings Twice"), James Thurber ("The Male Animal"), John Updike ("Rabbit, Run"), and Paul Brodeur ("The Stuntman").

A video library of movies that began as *New Yorker* articles or stories would include "My Sister Eileen" (Ruth McKenney), "Meet Me in St. Louis" (Benson), "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (Thurber), "Life with Father" (Clarence Day), "Pal Joey" (John O'Hara), "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (Tennessee Williams), "The Misfits" (A. J. Liebling), "In Cold Blood" (Capote), "The Swimmer" (John Cheever), "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" (Muriel Spark), and "Casualties of War" (Daniel Lang); and the magazine published the screenplay of Ingmar Bergman's "Cries and Whispers." The cross-fertilization between the magazine and the movies has also included films by Penelope Gilliatt ("Sunday Bloody Sunday"), Marshall Brickman ("Sleeper," "Manhattan," an Academy Award for "Annie Hall"), and Woody Allen (those three and more than twenty others). To fill out the program, a couple of coming attractions: in May, the director Ridley Scott will begin filming the movie of "Crisis in the Hot Zone," Richard Preston's memorable article about a near-outbreak of a deadly virus, published in our issue of October 26, 1992; and the screen rights to "Doubt," William Finnegan's exploration of the shortcomings of courtroom truth, published in our January 31, 1994, issue, have just been acquired by United Artists, which, according to *Variety*, "beat out several majors and webs for the story." Boffo!

From the very beginning, the movies have been a powerful prescription for America's blues. But the antidote has become a syndrome: what began as an escape from reality has stealthily usurped it. The very language is clotted with film idiom. Our personal scenarios unspool in a sequence of flashbacks, voice-overs, and cameos. We zoom in, cut to the chase, fade to black. As metaphor, movies are better than ever. In the eighteen-thirties, Tocqueville came here to encounter democracy; in the nineteen-eighties, Jean Baudrillard, France's leading *philosophe* of postmodernism, came here to encounter the movies. "You should begin with the screen and move outward to the city," he writes in "America." For Baudrillard, illusion is America's reality. He searches out the society not in the people but "in the speed of the screenplay, in the indifferent reflex of television, in the film of days and nights projected across an empty space." New York "is the world of 'Blade Runner' "; the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City is "straight out of 'Close Encounters' "; and Monument Valley is "the geology of the earth, the mausoleum of the Indians, and the camera of John Ford." The demented, too, see themselves on America's flickering screen: after the attempt to assassinate President Reagan, John Hinckley told psychiatrists that it was all "a movie starring me," with the President a featured player and "a cast of doctors, lawyers, and hangers-on."

As society's gaze moves inward, what it sees is increasingly a patchwork of cinematic images. Faced with a blighted urban world, we move farther into an ideal cinematic one. The public demand is for the moving image to be bigger, clearer, more portable, more ingenious, ubiquitous. The big screen will soon be in our home, which has been turned by video into "a venue." The small screen has already been designed into cars, eyeglasses, wristwatches, even (an actual sighting) the bottoms of swimming pools. In the next five years, according to experts, we will be able to "enhance" television—to let us talk to it, play with it, build our personal traits into characters for its stories, even make it serve up different versions of the same Hollywood movie. "American art, to reach the hearts of Americans, must be happy art," *Photoplay*, already six years old, wrote in 1917, in a front-page editorial plea for happy endings. "This, then, is the mandate of America to the photoplay—to exercise its high privilege and opportunity of making an art of happiness and a happiness of art." The movies are a technology of enchantment, and they have succeeded all too well. Last year, American films and videos brought in more than ten billion dollars. What began as "nickel madness" is now a delirium of distraction for an entire civilization. Pauline Kael was right about where we lost it. Even so: Let's go there. Let's go to the movies. ♦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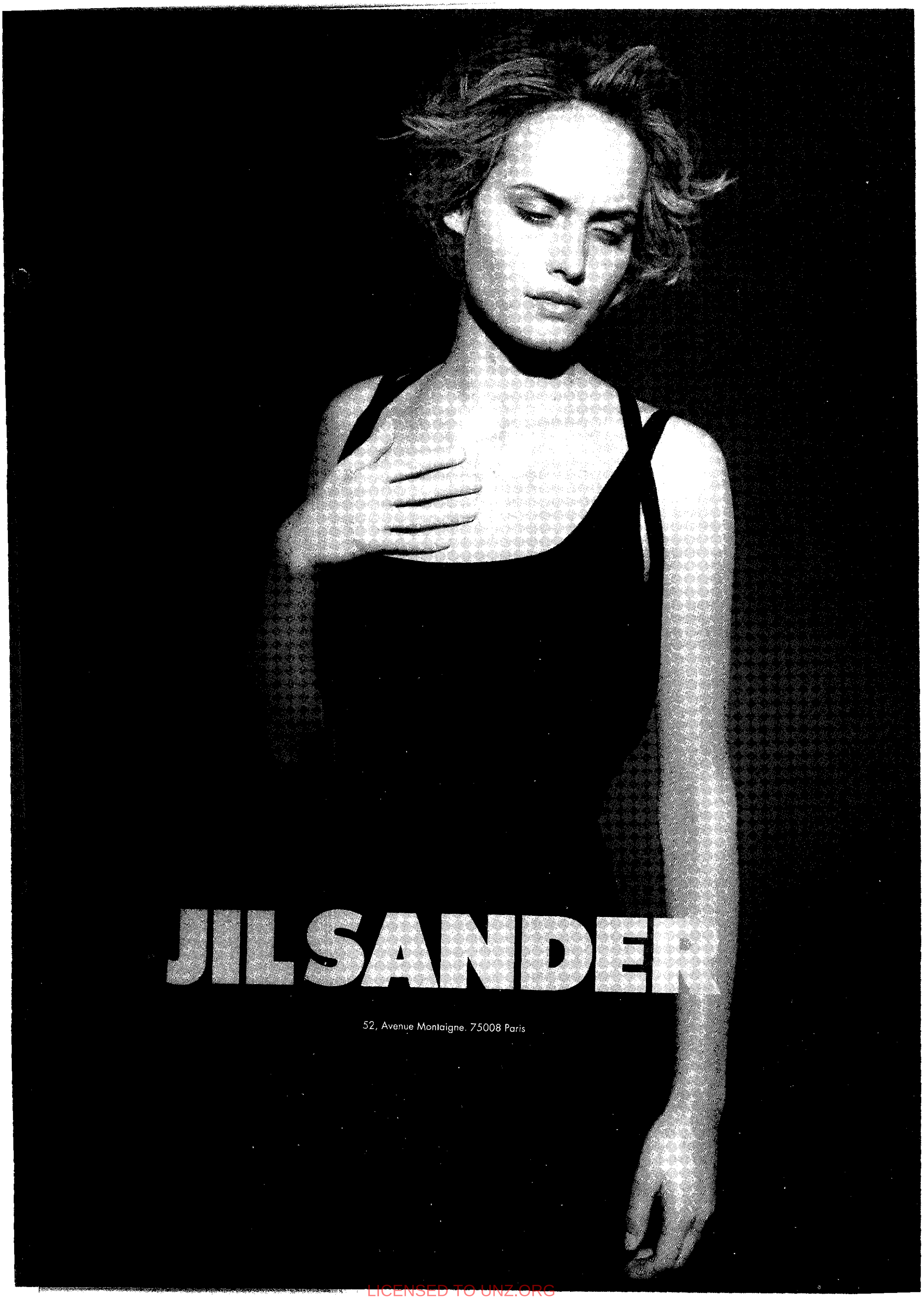
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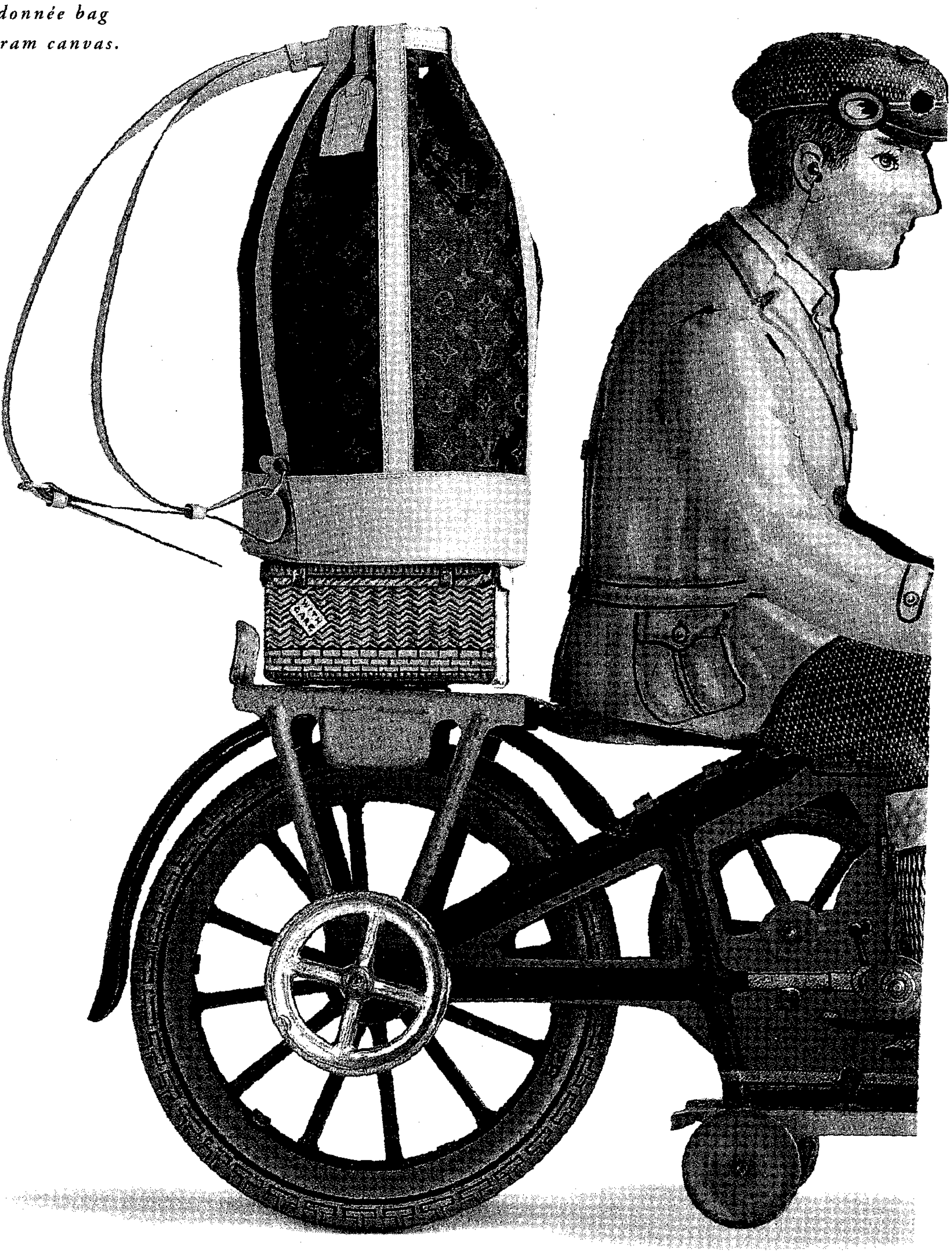

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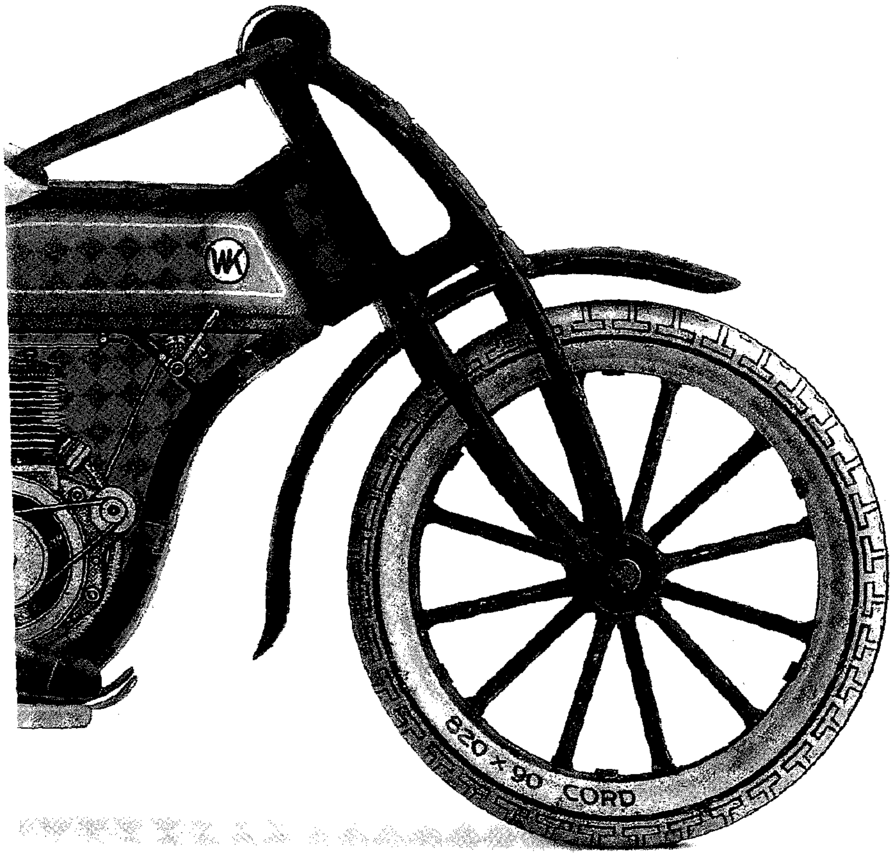
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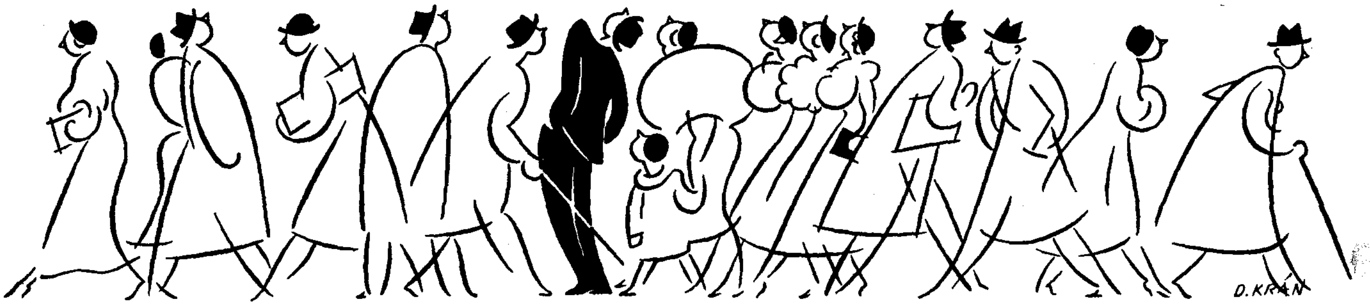


THE THEATRE

Dramatic Fires

SEVERAL plays dealing with African-American themes are opening around town this month, two of them at the Public. In "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992," which had a successful run in Los Angeles last year, the performer and playwright Anna Deavere Smith re-creates the volcanic events surrounding the Rodney King case. And Suzan-Lori Parks' "The America Play" follows a black actor, known as the Foundling Father, as he tours the country in a vaudevillelike show devoted to the life of Abraham Lincoln.

Two other works should not be overlooked. At INTAR, the Women's Project is presenting "Black," by Joyce Carol Oates. Ms. Oates' playwriting career has been uneven; the dramatic conceits she sometimes pulls off in her prodigious fiction have seemed contrived on the stage. Not here, happily. A tense social situation—a young professional woman, who is white, invites her ex-husband to dinner to meet her new boyfriend, who is black—is used to strip away the clichés that cloud discussions of racial matters. The other new play is Michael Henry Brown's "The Day the Bronx Died," at the American Jewish Theatre. Mr. Brown tells the story of a black man whose son becomes a casualty of urban violence, prompting him to recall a day in 1968 when, as a thirteen-year-old, he was forced to choose between his two best friends: one a black gang member and the other a Jew. The production, which is simultaneously intimate and sweeping, has been touted as a topical look at contemporary relations between blacks and Jews, but it's also a piercing evocation of a time that, whatever its torment, seems oddly innocent in retrospect.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
20	21	22				

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.) . . . ¶ Note: In March and April the Alliance of Resident Theatres/N.Y. is offering "Passports to Off Broadway," through which discounts on tickets to a number of shows are available. For further information, call 768-1818.

The Arabian Nights—Jenny Bacon is Scheherazade in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of the classic tales. Previews through March 20 matinée; opens that night at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Beauty and the Beast—A musical based on the 1991 Disney movie, featuring the songs of Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, as well as a few new ones by Mr. Menken and Tim Rice. With Susan Egan, Terrence Mann, and Tom Bosley. In previews. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

Carousel—Michael Hayden is Billy Bigelow in this production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1945 musical, which comes to New York via London's Royal National Theatre. Nicholas Hytner directed. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Day the Bronx Died—A play by Michael Henry Brown. Previews through March 20. Opens March 22 at 8. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

The Flowering Peach—Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson have the leads in this National Actors Theatre revival of Clifford Odets' 1954 play. Also with Josh Mostel. Previews through March 19. Opens March 20 at 3. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

New York Rock—Yoko Ono's new rock musical. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Richard II—Shakespeare's tragedy, with Michael Stuhlbarg. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show, which premièred at L.A.'s Mark Taper Forum last year. In previews. After a four-week run at the Public, the play will move to Broadway. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Written and Sealed—A work by the Venezuelan playwright Isaac Chocron, performed in English (three times a week) and Spanish (four times a week). Preview on March 16. Opens March 17 at 8. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

OPENED RECENTLY

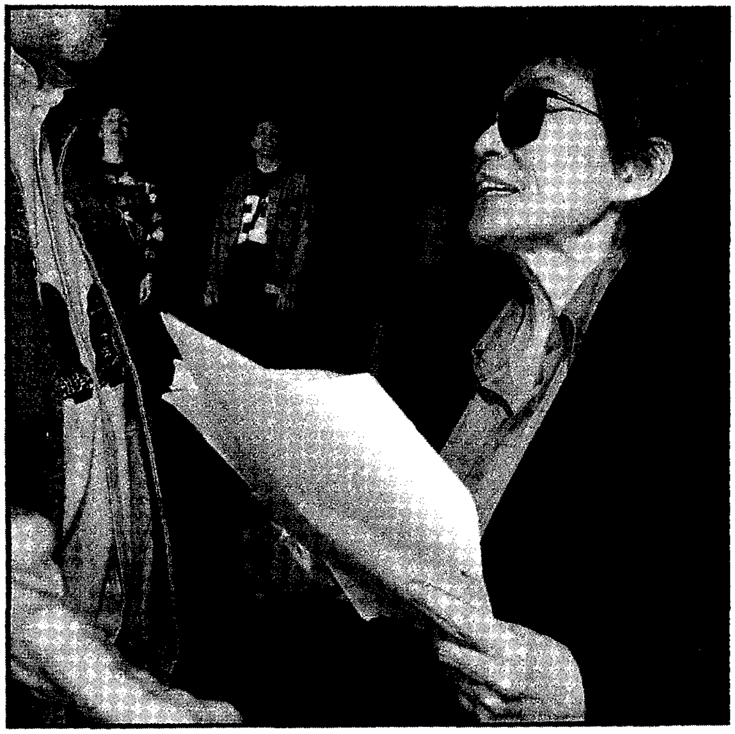
All in the Timing—Six sparkling one-act comedies by David Ives. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The America Play—A play by Suzan-Lori Parks, with Gail Grate, Reggie Montgomery, and Michael Potts. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes March 27.)

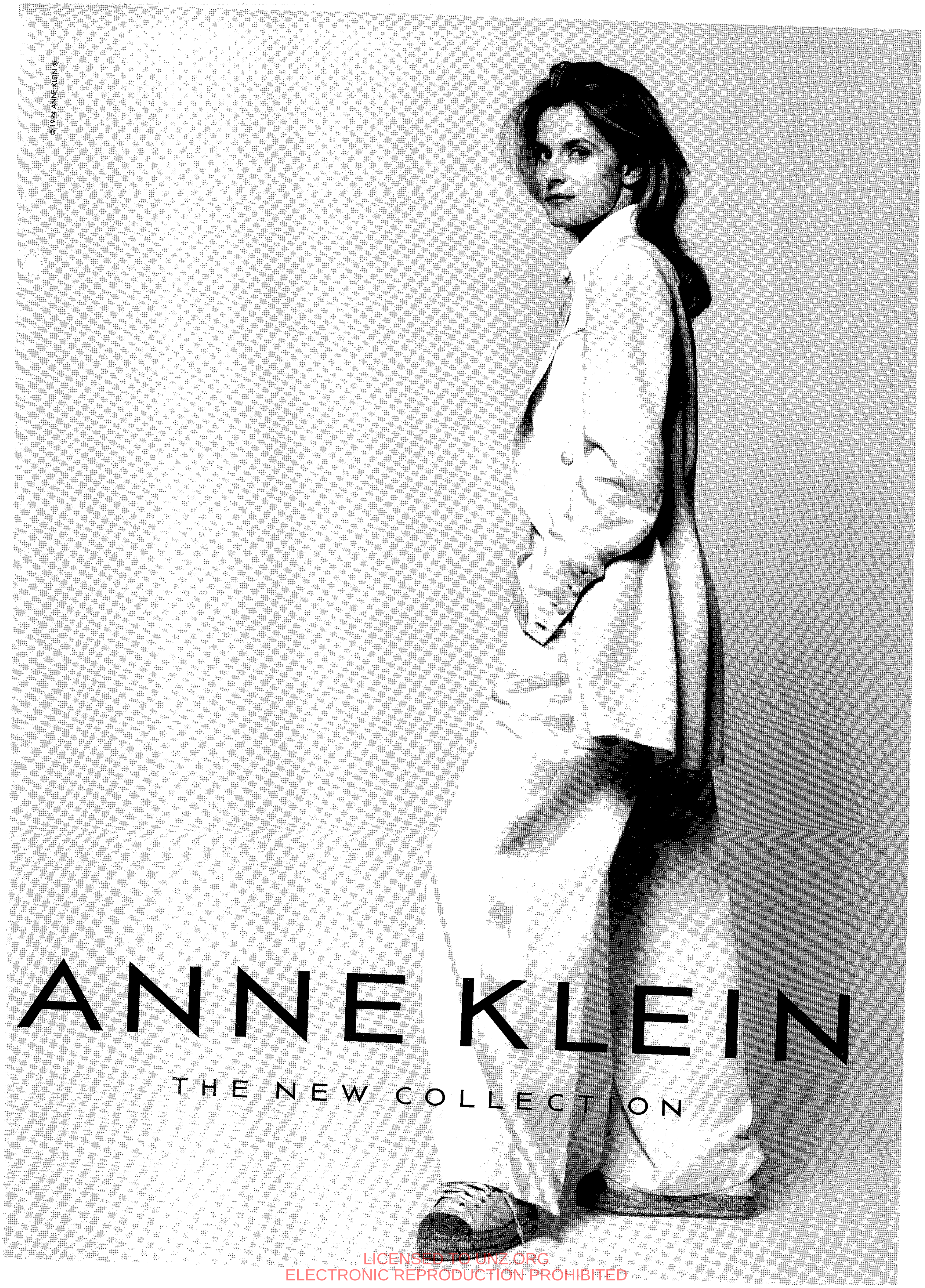
Angels in America—"Perestroika," the second half of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," is a masterpiece. Epic in scope, superbly acted, and directed with passionate restraint by George C. Wolfe, the play employs an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age. It runs in repertory with the first half, "Millennium Approaches." ("Perestroika" was reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93; "Millennium Approaches," 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

As You Like It—This production of Shakespeare's comedy is presented by the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes March 27.)

Avenue X—An a-cappella musical, by John Jiler and Ray Leslee, about racial disharmony *in a tough neighborhood in* Brooklyn in the early sixties. Its chief pleasures are some lovely doo-wop harmonies and the sensational, roof-raising voice of Alvaleta Guess. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)



Yoko Ono at a rehearsal for "New York Rock."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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

The Birthday Party—The Independent Theatre Company's production of this 1958 play by Harold Pinter summons up the unnerving mixture of brutality and banality that Pinter requires. The director, Dan Tedlie, has cleared a path through the chaotic proceedings. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes March 19.)

Black—A play by Joyce Carol Oates, presented by the Women's Project and directed by Tom Palumbo. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 873-3767. Closes April 3.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

Crime and Punishment—Robert Hein has adapted Dostoyevski's novel for the stage. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 777-7474.)

Cyrano: The Musical—The nose have it. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Damn Yankees—Victor Garber and Bebe Neuwirth star in the first Broadway revival of the 1955 musical by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop (book) and Richard Adler and Jerry Ross (score and lyrics). (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Errols—A musical by Todd J. Fletcher, about a trip to the South taken by a widowed black woman and her biracial son. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 777-7474. Closes March 26.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she *wrote with* Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Hello Again—Suggested by Arthur Schnitzler's play "La Ronde," Michael John LaChiusa's new musical travels through various American decades to tell a bittersweet story of hetero- and homosexual seductions and betrayals. LaChiusa is lucky to have director and choreographer Graciela Daniele: her streamlined and sexy stage pictures make the music seem better than it is. (2/21/94) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes March 27.)

Innocent Eréndira—An English-language adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez's novella, starring Miriam Colón. A joint production of Repertorio Español and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Closes March 20.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his *first musical* is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Jubilee—A production of the Cole Porter musical that gave us "Begin the Beguine," "Just One of Those Things," and "Why Shouldn't I?" The book is by Moss Hart. (Medicine Show, 552 W. 53rd St. 262-4216. Closes April 3.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. The subject allows Simon to do what he does best: tell jokes about the making of laughs. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Little Eyolf—Ibsen's themes seem a bit shopworn in this late play, but there are some deeply moving scenes in which an estranged husband and wife deal with the death of their child. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes March 19.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' *genial new production* of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Richard Chamberlain is all charm and suave good looks as Professor Henry Higgins, and Melissa Errico lends a fine voice and an attractive presence to the role of *Eliza*. With excellent support from Paxton Whitehead, Dolores Sutton, and Julian Holloway. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

My Head Was a Sledgehammer—Richard Foreman's new play, performed by his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes March 27.)

No Man's Land—Christopher Plummer and Jason Robards star in Harold Pinter's 1975 play. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes March 20.)

Old New York: False Dawn—The New York Art Theatre Institute's charming version of the first chapter of Edith Wharton's novella "Old New York." (Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 226-6211.)

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—The latest solo show by the boss of monologuists, Eric Bogosian, is basically a continuation of his 1990 "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll": portraits of a dozen alarming characters—*the manic, the depressive, the deluded,* and the deranged—who have squatter's rights in Bogosian's mind. (2/21/94) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs illusions that will amaze even those who wouldn't normally go out of their way to see card tricks. Under the direction of David Mamet, who is right at home in the slightly sinister man's world of magic, Mr. Jay makes willing and delighted fools of his audience. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion *instruments. The noise is terrific.* (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Three Birds Alighting on a Field—Timberlake Wertenbaker's satire of the London art world of the eighties, an import from London's Royal Court, has a rather heavy hand when it comes to parcelling out blame for the degradation of English values, but Max Stafford-Clark's direction has elicited good performances from Harriet Walter, Zach Grenier, and Daniel Gerroll. (2/21/94) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 27.)

Titus Andronicus—Robert Stattel has the title role in Shakespeare's tragedy. This Theatre for a New Audience version was directed by Julie Taymor. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes March 26.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

Dance Theatre of Harlem—March 16 at 8 and March 19 at 2 and 8: "The River," "Equus," and "Fête Noire." . . . ¶ March 17 at 7:30: A benefit performance of "Bach Passacaglia," "A Streetcar Named Desire," and "John Henry." . . . ¶ March 18 at 8 and March 20 at 1:30 and 7:30: "Toccata e Due Canzoni," "A Streetcar Named Desire," and "John Henry." . . . ¶ March 22 at 8: "Etosha" (company première), "Dialogues," and "Ginastera." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through March 27.)

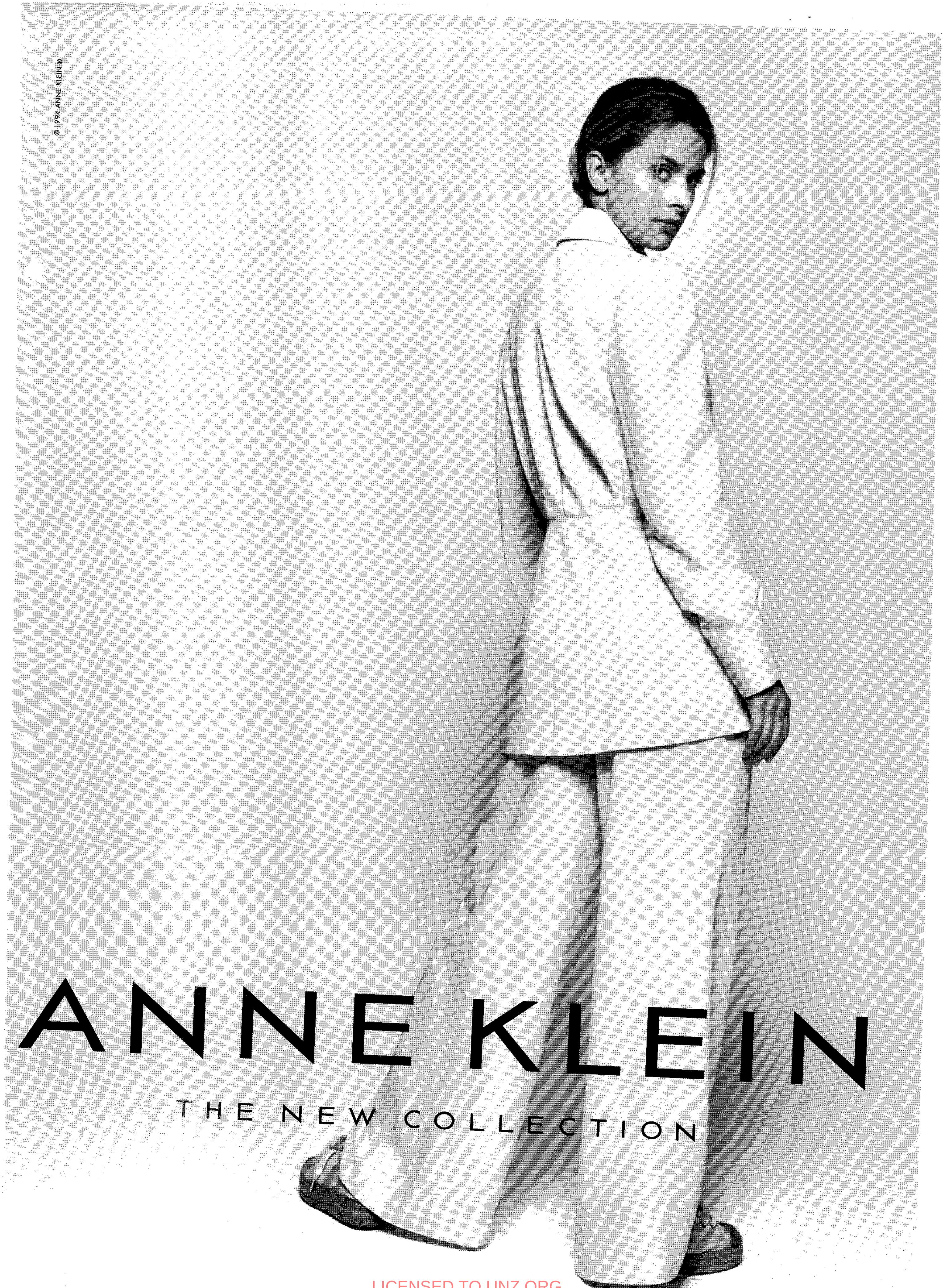
Merce Cunningham Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement. March 16 at 8: "Cargo X" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 17 at 8: "Cargo X," "Sounddance," and "CRWDSPCR." . . . ¶ March 18 at 8: "Change of Address" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 19 at 2: "Touchbase," "Sounddance," and "Breakers." . . . ¶ March 19 at 8: "Breakers" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 20 at 3: "CRWDSPCR" and "Enter." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Feld Ballets/NY—Final performances of the engagement. March 16 at 8: "Play Bach," "Echo," "La Vida," and "MRI." . . . ¶ March 17 at 8: "Common Ground," "Asia," "Kore," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 18 at 8: "Aurora I," "Asia," "Ion," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ March 19 at 8: "Common Ground," "Doo Dah Day," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ March 20 at 2: "Contra Pose," "La Vida," "Echo," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ March 20 at 7:30: "MRI," "Doo Dah Day," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Limon Dance Company—Opening performance of a two-week engagement: "Mazurkas," "Fantomes" (New York première), and "The Moor's Pavane." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 22 at 8. Through April 3.)

Company Appels—A New York-based modern-dance company, in the première of an evening-length work, "Fields and Stars." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 17-20 at 8:30.)

Annie-B Parson/Big Dance Theatre Co.—In "Lucifer Kicking" (première). (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 22 at 8. Through March 27.)



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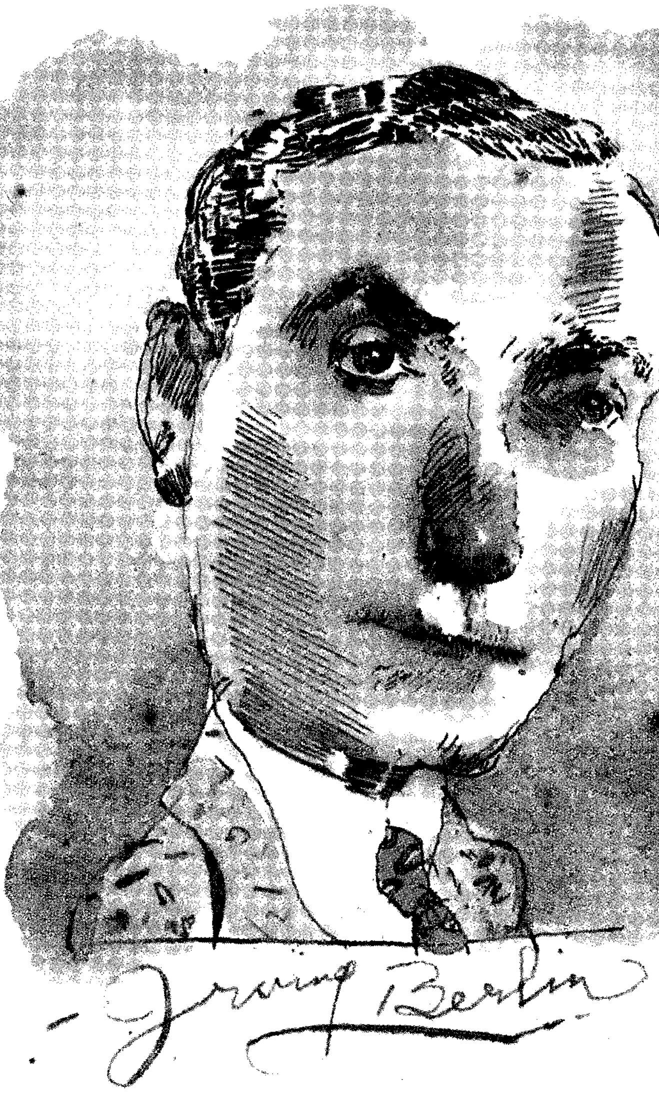

NIGHT LIFE

The Melody Lingers On

At the 1942 Academy Awards ceremony, Irving Berlin had the unusual honor of presenting an Oscar to himself, for the song "White Christmas," which Bing Crosby crooned in "Holiday Inn." "This goes to a nice guy," the composer quipped. "I've known him all my life." Most Americans have had a similar relationship with Berlin's music, which has its roots in Tin Pan Alley, and encompasses gems like "Alexander's Ragtime Band" and "Everybody's Doin' It" and an enormous number of show tunes and movie songs, including "Easter Parade," "Cheek to Cheek," "The Girl That I Marry," and "There's No Business Like Show Business." Berlin had published nearly a thousand songs by the time he died, five years ago, at the grand old age of a hundred and one.

The prolific songwriter's ghost—along with the spirits of Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Ethel Merman, and all the other singers who thrived on his work—will be invoked this week when Symphony Space presents "Wall to Wall Irving Berlin" (March 19, from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M.). The marathon revue, which is free, will feature a battalion of Broadway and cabaret heavies. Andrea Marcovicci will perform "Say It Isn't So" and other songs; Betty Comden and Adolph Green will deliver a few of Astaire's numbers (minus the fancy footwork); a crew of New York stage veterans, including Linda Lavin and Jo Sullivan Loesser, will take part in a musical-theatre medley. Margaret Whiting, Steve Ross, and Mary Cleere Haran will also be on hand, with musicians and musical groups whose tastes range from classical to jazz and ragtime, attesting to the scope of Berlin's influence. There will be panel discussions, too, including one featuring Kitty Carlisle Hart chatting up the composer's daughters and grandchildren. Top hat, white tie, and tails are optional, but a light heart and dancing shoes would not be amiss.

CONCERTS

The Chieftains—When the original Chieftains got together in the fifties, they were classically trained musicians aiming to lend their skills to traditional Irish folk music. Since then, the band has played with symphony orchestras, American country artists, and too many rock stars to mention. (They even opened for the Pope once, at an outdoor Mass in Dublin.) Though the Chieftains have made stacks of first-rate albums, there's really no better way to capture their glowing, spirited virtuosity than to see them live; and of course, there's no better time for that than on St. Patrick's Day. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 17 at 8.)

George Shearing and Dick Hyman—92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 17 at 8.

"Wall to Wall Irving Berlin"—A twelve-hour tribute. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. March 19, from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M. No tickets necessary.)

Keith Washington—Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. March 19 at 9 and midnight. For information about tickets, call 777-0600.

Tom Hamilton and Ben Neill—Music for electronics and computers. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 21 at 8.)

Jazz Composers Collective—Presenting works by Eddie Gale and Ben Allison. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. March 22 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Roulette—Jim Staley, March 17; Todd Levin, March 18; William Hooker, March 19; and Songs from a Random House, March 20. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Concerts at 9.)

ROCK AND FOLK

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. (307-7171)—In the heart of the theatre district, a haven for those whose musical tastes run left of "Tommy." **BLACK 47** is here on March 17, St. Patrick's Day. This Irish band's raucous pop hybrid—which combines elements of traditional Celtic folk, funk, and Mott the Hoople-style rock—comes with wise, funny, rabble-rousing lyrics. (You can also catch them about twice a week at Paddy Reilly's.) **URGE OVERKILL** plays on March 19, with guests **EUGENIUS** (who headline at Maxwell's the following night). The Chicago-based Urge received glowing notices last year for "Saturation," an album that balanced a brash, punky energy with hooks and arrangements worthy of the most delicious power pop. The band just may have the stuff that allowed Nirvana (whose 1992 tour featured Urge as a supporting act) and others before them to make the leap from heavy rotation in college dorms to heavy rotation on MTV.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This week, the club continues its twentieth-anniversary celebration, which will run through early April. **ANNIE HASLAM** appears on March 18. As lead singer with Renaissance during the English band's heyday in the seventies, Haslam was the First Lady of art rock, a generally masculine genre popularizied by Yes, E.L.P., Gentle Giant, and other cape-wielding warriors. Renaissance preferred to steer away from metaphysical lyrics and baffling time signatures and actually wrote a few surprisingly listenable songs. Haslam's distinctive voice has been absent from the scene for years, but her influence on a fair share of alternative-music types is obvious. It should be interesting to hear what she's been up to lately. March 19: **CHRISTINE LAVIN** entertains. On March 21, catch jazz diva **CASSANDRA WILSON,** whose eclectic, idiosyncratic, and brilliantly dramatic style draws on funk and rap influences. Appearing with Wilson are the **MAHOTELLA QUEENS,** who will perform a cappella. **DARLENE LOVE** continues her Tuesday night stand on March 22.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. On March 17, Sin-é regulars **TALKING TO ANIMALS** and **ADAM ROTH AND THE BLUE DEVILS.** Singer-songwriter **TODD KRAY** stops by on March 21. Kray is a native New Yorker, but his gently gritty acoustic rock has something of a Midwestern feel to it.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. Sparse atmospheric rock with **MAZZY STAR** on March 17.

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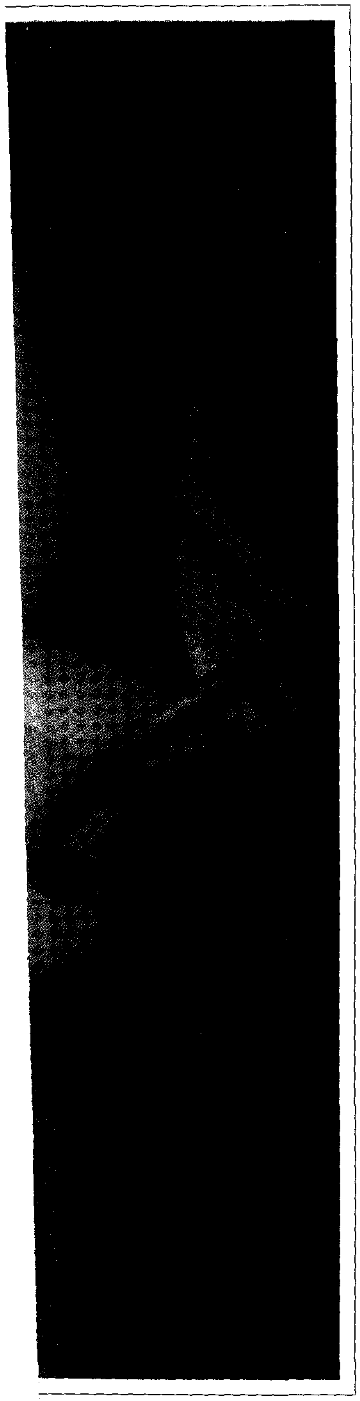

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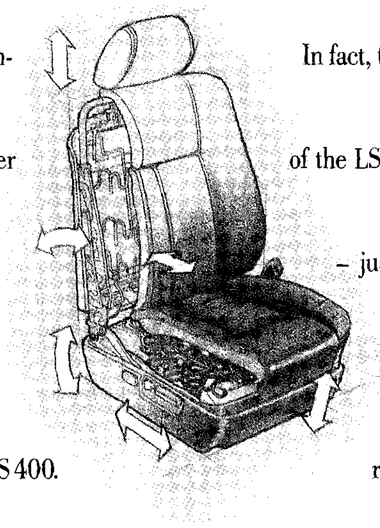

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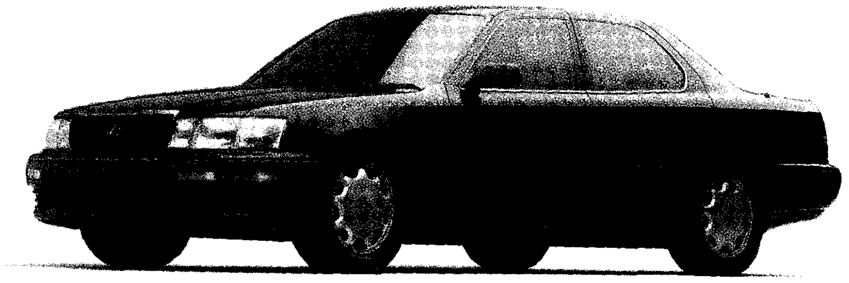

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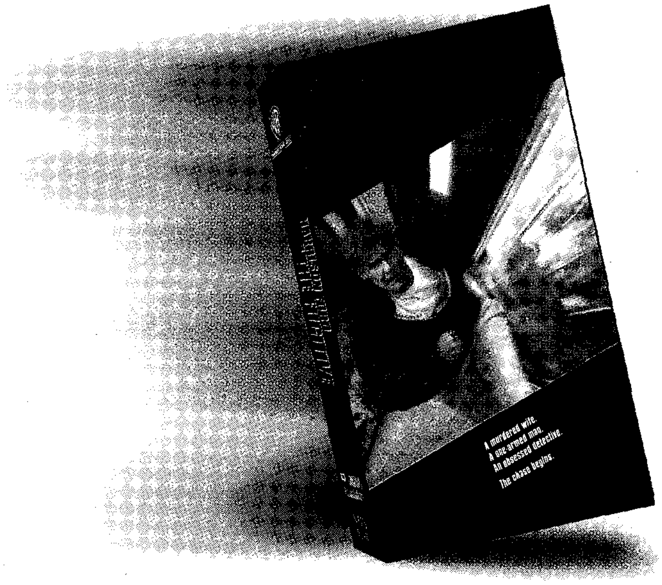

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

CHINA CLUB, 2130 Broadway, at 75th St. (877-1166)—A few years back, this was the place visiting rock stars came, after playing at larger venues, to jam and pick up models. There's less action of that sort nowadays, but if you can get past the wanna-be vibes, you can enjoy the occasional promising young band—usually of the hard-rock variety—that shows up here.

DOWNTIME, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table.

GRAND, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling, with a wall-o'-speakers up front, and an ear-decompression lounge around the bar in the back.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. In yet another nod to St. Paddy, **GREEN DAY** performs on March 17, with **TILT**. . . .¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—Up until a few years ago, this stretch of the Lower East Side was only for the bold. But now that the artists have moved in, you have to go to Williamsburg if you want to get any more bohemian. The Ludlow Street Café, which was one of the first places to stake a claim on the new frontier, is an unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can eat cheap, drink cheap, and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO**, a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On March 16: **MACHINES OF LOVING GRACE**. The **FAITH HEALERS** arrive on March 17, with Truman's Water. On March 20: **EUGENIUS**. Frontman Eugene Kelly claims that Eugenius "took the idea of experimentation from the sixties" but that their neo-psychedelic guitar rock is a nineties thing. On its second album, "Mary Queen of Scots" (named after a pre-sixties phenomenon), the band tries to lend a postmodern edge to its trippy textures while addressing age-old issues, like homesickness and unrequited love.

PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—This Irish outpost has become known as the birthplace of the roots-and-rebellion rock band Black 47, which acknowledged its paternity by putting a picture of the joint on the cover of its latest record, "Fire of Freedom." Prepare for a packed room, flowing Guinness, and an Irish-hootenanny atmosphere. **BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights. When there's no live music, the jukebox blasts everything from the Chieftains to Greg Trooper to Paddy Reilly, the Irish folksinger who owns the place.

RODEO BAR, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—A Western theme bar, attached to a Southwestern restaurant. The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, there's a horse trailer that's been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, occasionally, throwing. But wait, there's more: video rodeos, New Mexico memorabilia, and live music nightly—country, blues, folk, rock, hillbilly.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week: another dark, sweaty rock club, with flannel-clad stage divers and the occasional whirling mosh pit.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. **LUCKY PETERSON** stops by on March 18-19.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. March 18: **SERIOUS PILGRIM** appears. On March 19, **WARREN HAYNES** serves up bluesy rock, Southern style.

JAZZ AND BLUES

A.K.A, 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. There's a long, elegant bar with enough seats to accommodate the few non-dancers; it can be a tight squeeze, but it's a svelte crowd.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Through March 20: the **HEATH BROTHERS** with **HANK CRAWFORD** and **JIMMY MC GRIFF.** Both saxophonist Jimmy Heath and his brother, bassist Percy, could vie for most underrated jazz musician; organist McGriff and altoist Crawford mix R. & B. grease with jazz smarts. The **ZAWINUL SYNDICATE** and the **MIKE STERN GROUP** begin a weeklong engagement on March 22. Joe Zawinul, who for years was the keyboardist and prime creative force behind Weather Report, has dropped his first name and his heavy-handed textures and is now playing with a newfangled savagery. Stern, an excellent bop guitarist, earned the wrath of jazz purists everywhere, when (following Miles Davis's instructions) he turned up his fuzzbox and played like Hendrix, on Davis's live record "We Want Miles." Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here, shoehorned into a corner with the resplendent Baldwin that Paul Desmond bequeathed to the late Bradley Cunningham. **JESSE DAVIS, KEVIN HAYS, DWAYNE BURNO,** and **LEON PARKER** are here through March 19. Catching saxophonist Davis alongside pianist Hays, bassist Burno, and drummer Parker is like sneaking a peek at the future. The enthusiasm these young guns regularly generate is practically a guarantee of riches just down the road. Dining.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—An authentic old locker deep in the heart of the meat district that has been converted into a comfortable, banquette-lined paradise. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. March 18: Jean-Paul Bourelly.

Down Beat, 101 Seventh Ave. S. (620-4000)—A long, warm, wood-panelled room with upholstered banquettes, a nicely appointed bar, and a reliable roster of jazz names. Murals of Diz, Bird, and Basie adorn the walls, so the players are always in good company.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. Through March 20: the **MOSE ALLISON** trio. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar and lounge, hidden inside the Time Café, with satin couches and mosaic tables. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, this jazz club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room upstairs. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and **MIKE HASHIM** team up through March 19.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club, run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-

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DARK MOON (Chris Isaak, "A Perfect World").

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER (Bono and Gavin Friday, "In the Name of the Father").

SEX AND THE CHURCH (David Bowie, "The Buddha of Suburbia").

JUST KEEP ME MOVING (k.d. lang, "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues").

FARAWAY, SO CLOSE! (Nick Cave, "Faraway, So Close").

I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU (The Flamingos & The Complexions, "A Bronx Tale").

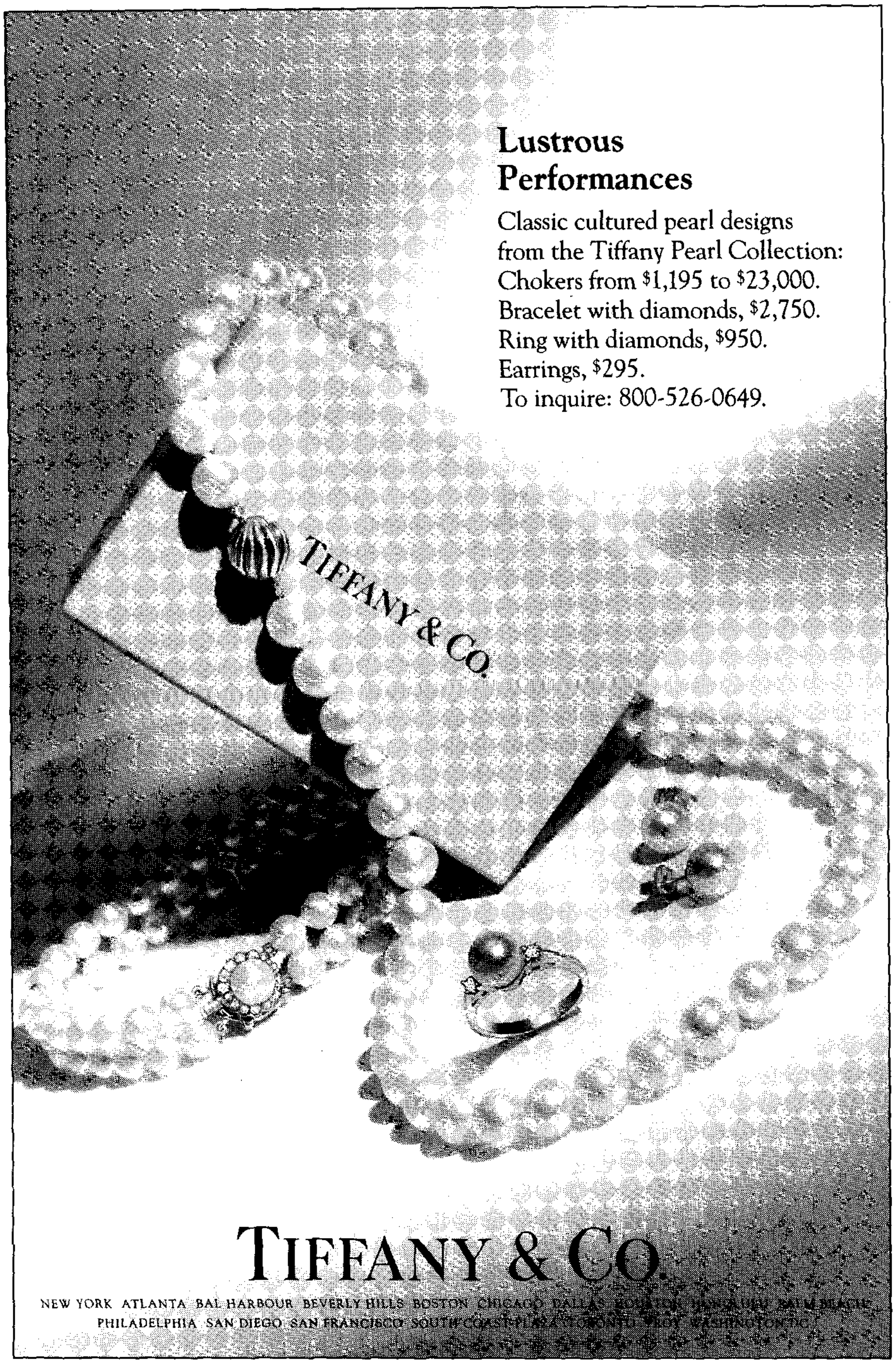
WHEN YOU COME BACK TO ME (World Party, "Reality Bites").

LOVETOWN (Peter Gabriel, "Philadelphia").

REAL THING (Pearl Jam and Cypress Hill, "Judgement Night").

SLOW TANGO (Jane Siberry, "Faraway, So Close").

YMCA (Village People, "Wayne's World 2").



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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. The Tokyo/New York *Noise Festival Part Four, (which features* local drone meisters **THURSTON MOORE** and **MARC RIBOT** on March 17) runs March 17-20. Catch **MEDESKI, MARTIN, & WOOD** on March 21. This trio (two of whom are members of the Lounge Lizards) plays churning be-bop, driven by the tortured sounds of John Medeski's Hammond organ. On March 22, flutist **ROBERT DICK** performs Jimi Hendrix classics.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room (putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes) has more of a country-club feel. Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. **VERNEL BAGNERIS** continues his salute to Jelly Roll Morton. Closed Sundays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Tuesdays belong to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird Society Orchestra; Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to Lew *Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and* his Bourbon Street Swingers; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. **MIGHTY SPARROW** plays on March 19. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Space at Chase, 98 Third Ave., at 12th St. (475-1407)—One of those East Village joints where, for a few bucks, you can hear a handful of local rock bands. As is usually the case at these establishments, some of the bands will make you want to cower under the pinball machine while others will make you want to dance and shout and start your own independent label. As for décor, there's a bar, some chairs, some tables, some walls, a ceiling, and two dartboards.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. **ROLAND HANNA** continues through March 20. One of the giants of Detroit's fertile piano delta, Hanna is an Ellington scholar, a crackerjack blues player, and a knight of the Liberian government. An open-armed stylist who can be as fastidious as he is funky, Hanna remains delightfully beyond categorization. On March 22, **CYRUS CHESTNUT** begins an engagement.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. **BOBBY HUTCHINSON** is in through March 20. It took Hutchinson to translate the modernist grammar of sixties jazz onto the vibraphone. He's at his best when he glides into the spare, mysterious ruminations perfected on classics like Eric Dolphy's "Out To Lunch." Hutchinson also loves to strut his piston-mallet technique on up-tempo numbers. His exemplary band includes the simpatico pianist **KENNY BARRON.** The **MAL WALDRON** trio arrives on March 22. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate.

CABARET

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—This week, in the woody nook known as the Oak Room, **STEVE ROSS** and **JEANNE LEHMAN** continue their monthlong engagement, a tribute titled "Noël Coward and His Ladies." Dining.

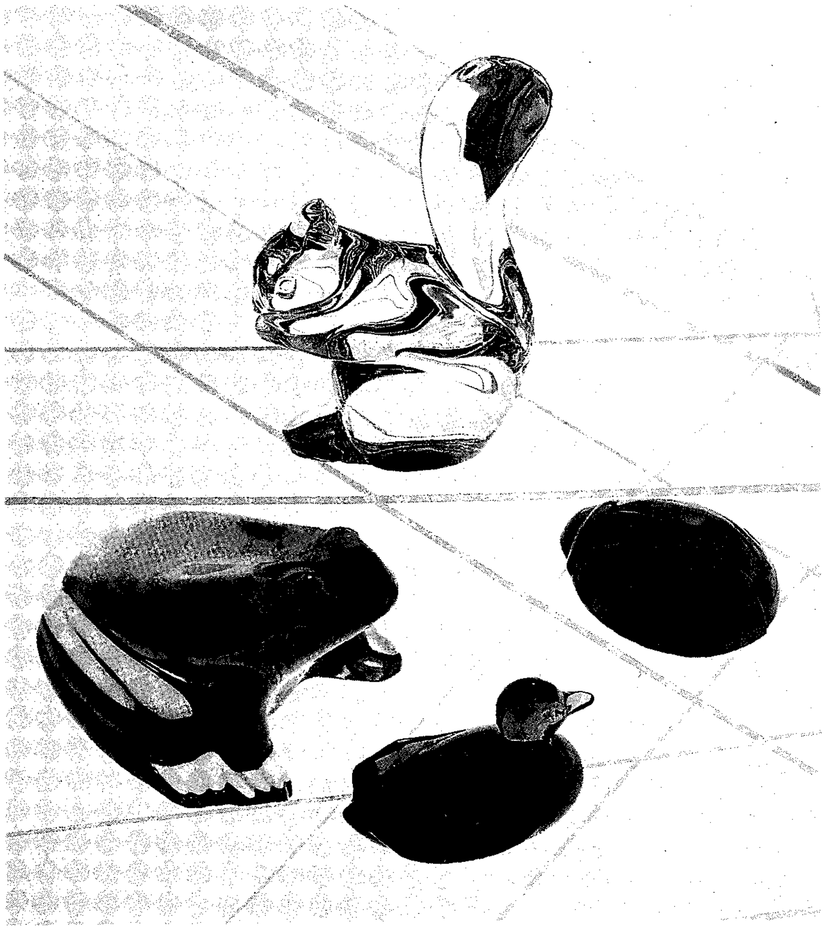
Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**MICHAEL FEINSTEIN,** the extrovert pianist and singer, continues his engagement here through March 19. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **SUSANNAH MC CORKLE,** here through March 26, should feel at home in this upscale aerie; both she and the club know how to be sophisticated without making a big deal about it. Literate and well informed on the history of her art, McCorkle will take her *audience on a jazz-inflected stroll through* the last seventy years of American popular song, stopping along the way to breathe in the rarefied atmosphere of Porter, Mercer, Arlen, and the others. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red, gold, and green cabaret. **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY** and **LIZ CALLAWAY** stop by on March 20, fresh from their performance in the Broadway-stars segment of Symphony Space's Irving Berlin tribute. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs at this gilt and lamé club is the Blue Room, a plush little nook with celestial wallpaper, far from the midtown racket. Living legend **LITTLE RICHARD** appears on March 22.



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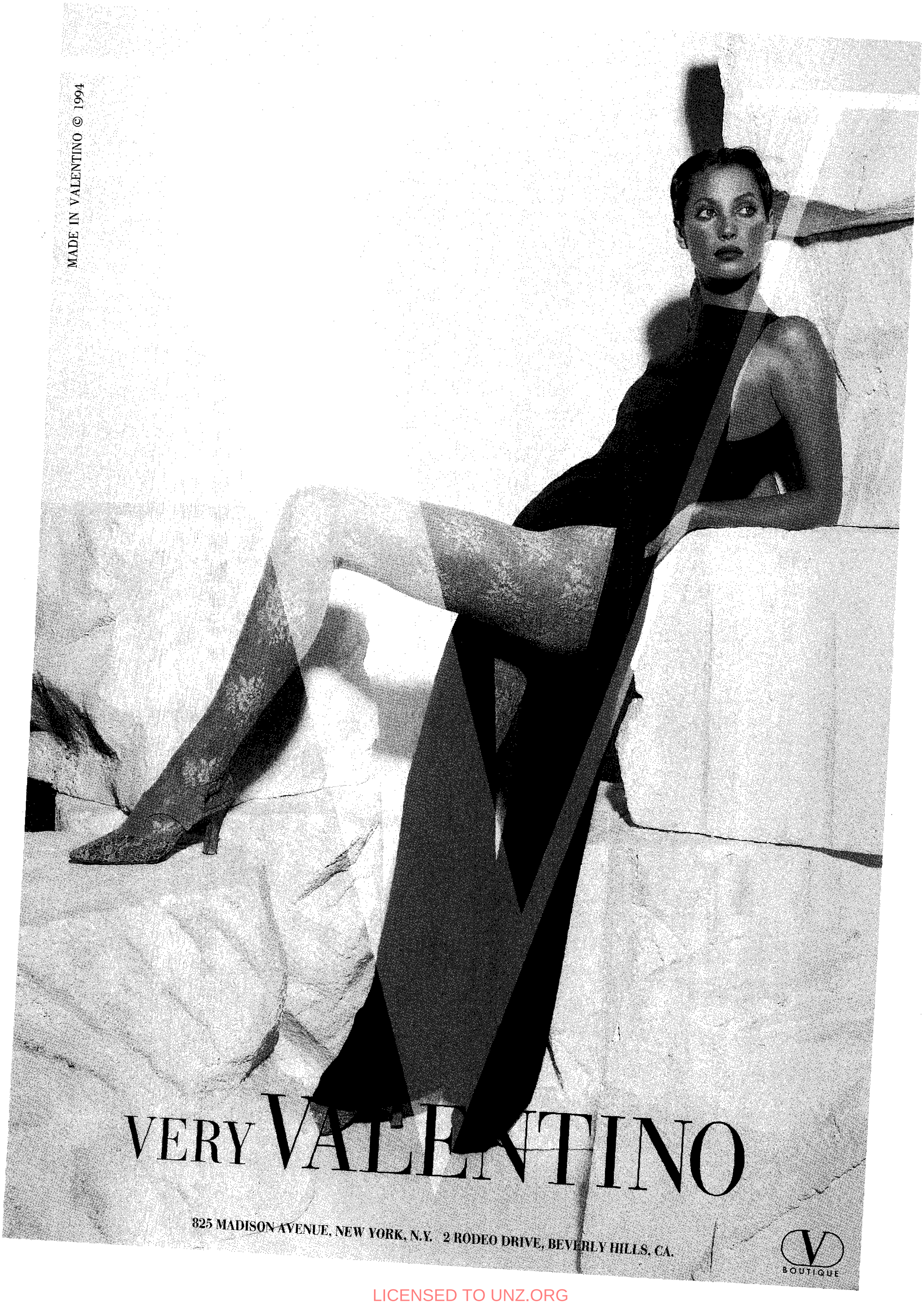
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BOUTIQUE

ART

Museum Qualities

LOUISE LAWLER has devoted her entire career to dismantling the cozy assumption that art works are self-contained objects. Revelling in the ironies of presentation, she uses photographs, texts, and everyday objects to document the specific settings and contexts that envelop art—the gallery, the museum, the corporate office, the home—provoking us to consider just what it means to hang a Jackson Pollock, say, over a decorous eighteenth-century Sèvres tureen.

Lawler's current installation at Metro Pictures (150 Greene Street; through March 26) is her best New York show in years. Her approach remains the same—the standard conceptual photo/text combo—but her selections are often wickedly funny. "Nipple" pairs two photographs of replicas of classical statuary from the Queens Museum. One photo shows two Antinoüs-like youths and bears the sly text "Does he get enough attention?" The other is a closeup of one statue's nipple. Questioning the strict division between aesthetic and prurient "attention," Lawler has fun with the received idea that classical art is pure. Indeed, Lawler repositions these two figures—whose function at the Queens Museum is understood as blandly aesthetic and educational—as if they were the sullenly pretty habitués of a gay bar.

MUSEUMS

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum. . . . ¶ "Degas Landscapes." Seventy-five paintings, pastels, and monotypes, many of them on view for the first time since a solo Degas show in 1892. The oil on paper "Italian Landscape" (1857-1858) displays the astonishing pictorial shorthand that flowered in his mature paintings, but the most striking works are the color monotypes, most of which the artist executed in a single concentrated period between 1890 and 1892. Many of them seem not to belong to the nineteenth century. Through April 3. . . . ¶ "The Hero Twins of Ancient Maya Myth: Rollout Photographs by Justin Kerr." Photographs of ceramic vessels from the fourth century to the eighth. . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth by Caspar David Friedrich and Ferdinand Hodler, among others. . . . ¶ "The Golden Age of Danish Painting," a show ranging from the late eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth, features work by Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1785-1853) and his most famous student, Christen Købke (1810-48). Eckersberg's Italian landscapes—views of the Porta Angelica and the gardens of the Villa Borghese, in Rome—are particularly lovely. Købke's numerous views of Frederiksborg Castle combine precise observation with subdued melancholia, making it a suitable meditative site for a latter-day Hamlet. . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixteenth-century Italian drawings by Caravaggio, Fra Bartolommeo, Bronzino, and many others. Through March 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect." A retrospective, beginning with material from the eighteen-eighties, that includes some three hundred and fifty drawings, thirty scale models, six full-scale wall constructions, more than a hundred photographs, and architectural fragments. There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Guggenheim Museum. . . . ¶ A section of a sixty-foot-diameter dome by Chuck Hoberman, which opens and closes in a fluid motion reminiscent of the expansion and contraction of the iris. Through April 12. . . . ¶ "Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee" comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ "Gesture and Pose: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the Collection." Through April 5. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Women on the Edge: Twenty Photographers in Europe, 1919-39" includes work by Ilse Bing and Lucia Moholy. . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright's Designs for the Guggenheim Museum." There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. . . . ¶ "Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem," a retrospective exhibition, explores the intellectual underpinnings of this protean artist through a selection of his sculptures, drawings, and videos from the early sixties to the present. Morris's career touches on many of the most important artistic developments of the last thirty years—minimalism, performance art, Conceptualism—confounding expectations of aesthetic unity or continuity. It may seem daunting in its variety and complexity, but this retrospective is a kind of crash course in American artistic sensibilities since Abstract Expressionism. In conjunction with the artist's show at the Guggenheim SoHo. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Nine installations with mirrors, by Robert Morris. Through April 4. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), whose art has been so well assimilated into the mainstream that it feels like a kind of modernism lite. The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

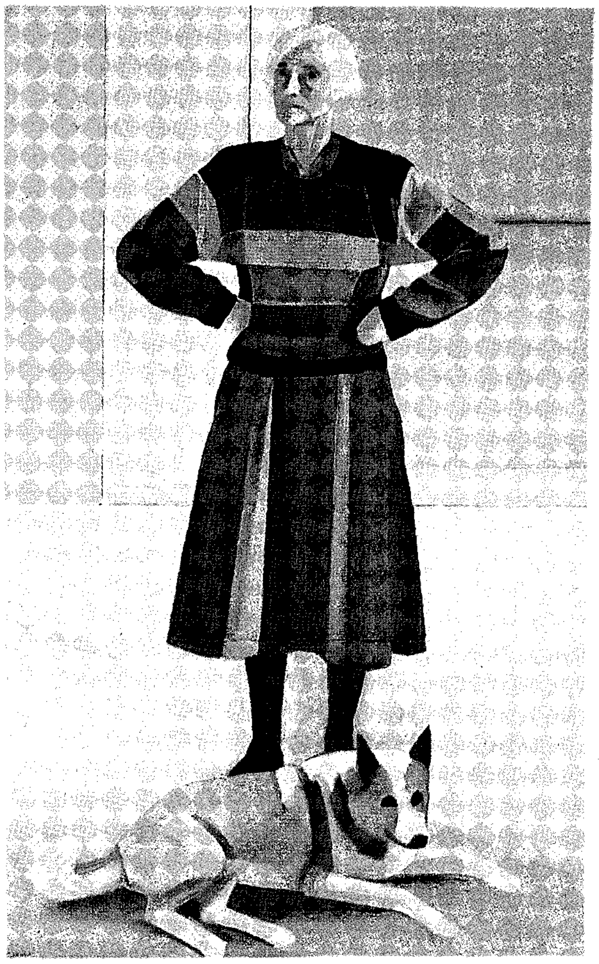
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Collection in Context: A Year from the Collection Circa 1952." Approximately seventy-five paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs. Through April 17. . . . ¶ A dual exhibition devoted to photographers Walker Evans (1903-75) and Dan Graham (born 1942). Both are heavy on urban and suburban drear; tract housing, diners, billboards, and the landscape of commerce are recurrent images. Graham's videos are also on view. Through March 20. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fine art ("Watson and the Shark," by John Singleton Copley), casts of fossils, and a sample of items that have been found in fishes' bellies—armor, hubcaps, a fur coat—are a few of the items in "Sharks! Fact and Fantasy." There's also a walk-through diorama with life-size models of seventeen species of shark. The lighting and ambient sound make you think you're underwater. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

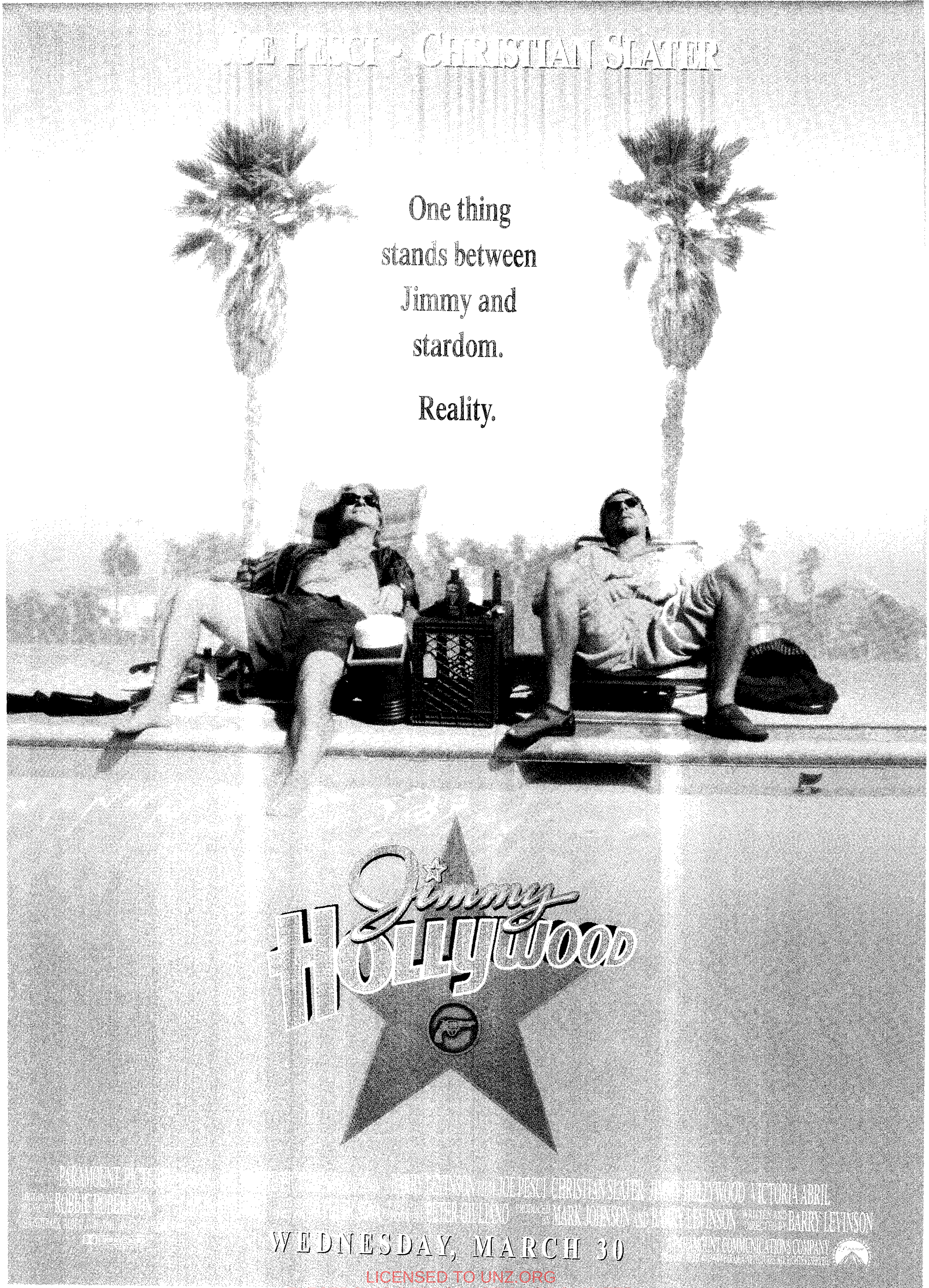
BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-1975." . . . ¶ "Walter Crane: Design for Children." Crane (1845-1915), an English artist and contemporary of William Morris, is best known for his fairy-tale illustrations, which are included here, along with wallcoverings, textiles, and other decorative items. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History." Two hundred photographs and videos, sculptural and architectural models, and designs of existing and planned memorials, examine how and why museums and monuments are



Self-portrait (with Blaze) by Louisa Matthiasdottir (Emmerich).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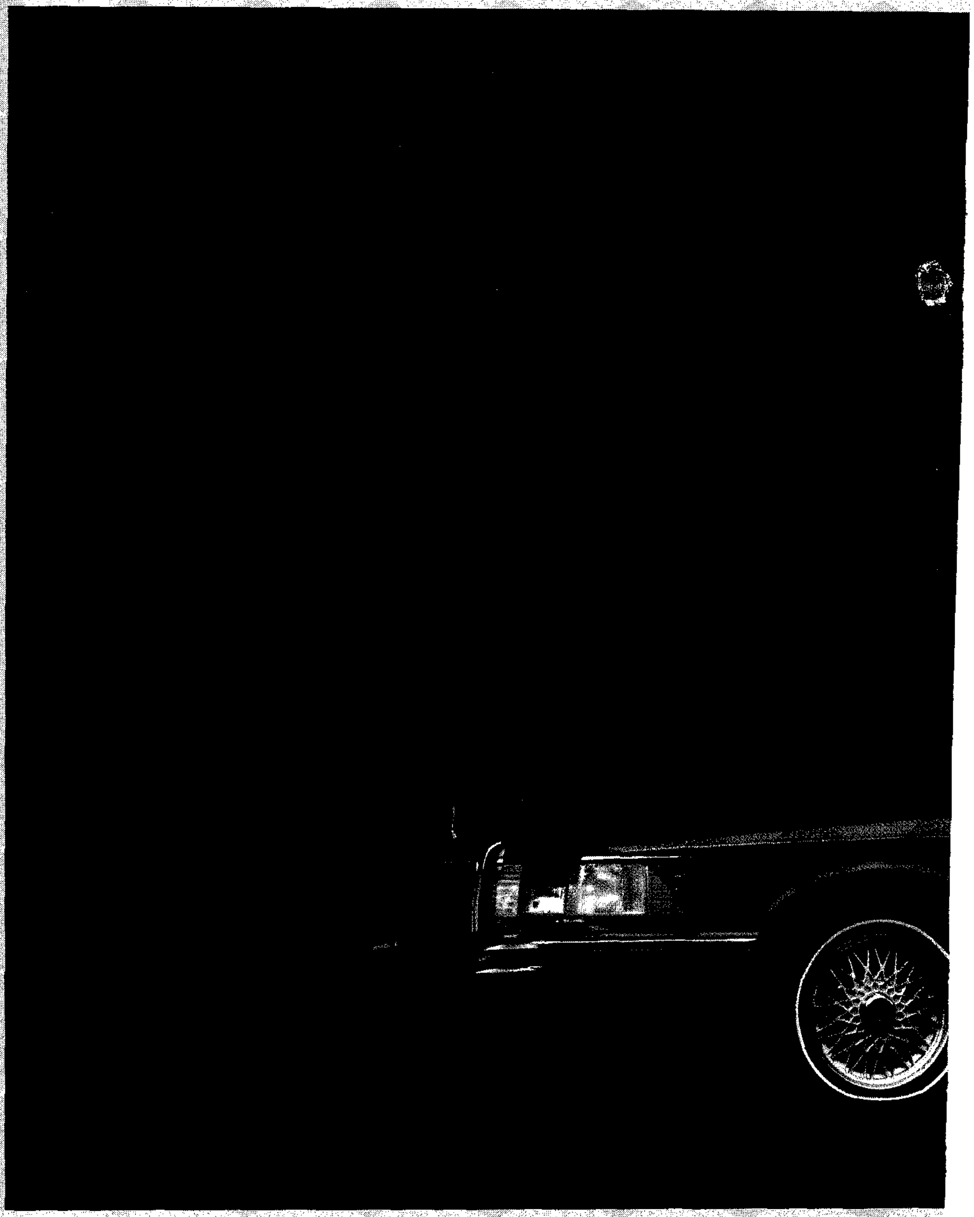

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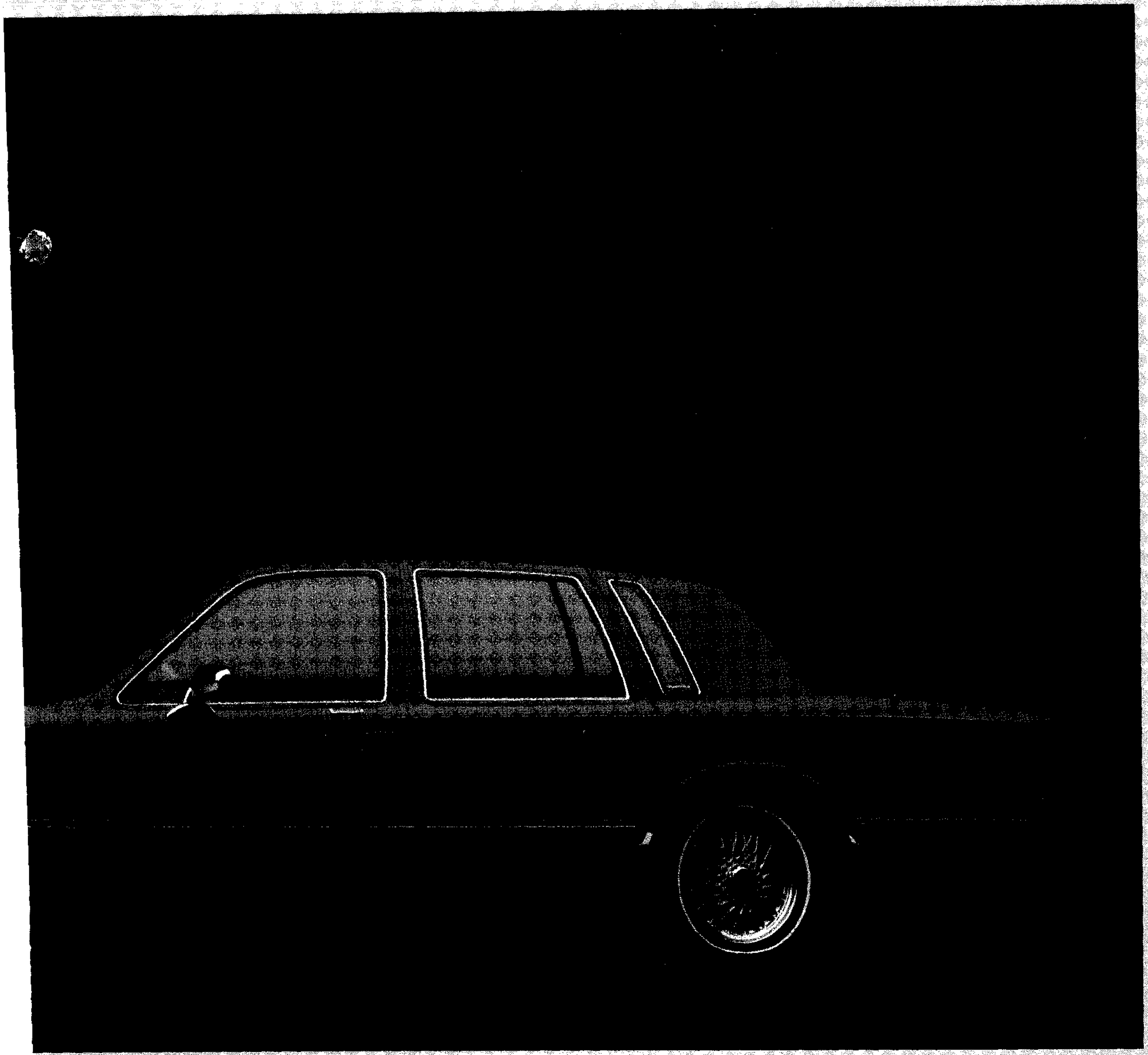

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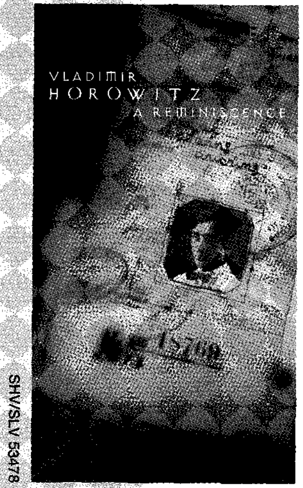

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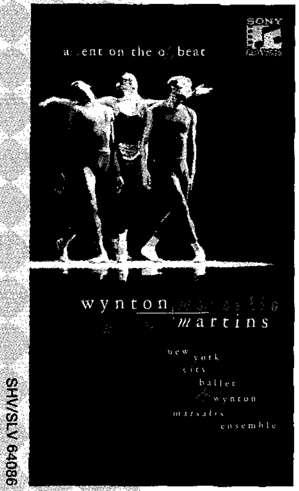

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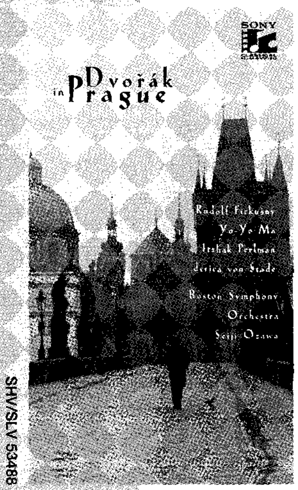

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shaping the public memory of the Holocaust. . . . ¶ An exhibit of Israeli art from the museum's collection, notably "Kaddish," a series of eight etchings by Moshe Gershuni. . . . ¶ "Four Contemporary Works," by Aharon Gluska, Vivienne Koorland, Robert Wilson, and Joe Zucker. Through March 31. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing." At the center of this exhibit are the library's three Gutenberg Bibles (the single largest collection in the world) and a replica of the press on which they were printed. On Saturdays and Sundays at 1, there are demonstrations on the press. Through April 17. . . . ¶ "To Trick the Eye: The Birth of Italian Theatre Design." Through April 10. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale." Paintings, sculptures, and drawings, recently exhibited in Venice, by Mor Faye and Moustapha Dimé, of Senegal, and Tamessir Dia, Ouattara, and Gérard Santoni, of the Ivory Coast. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Bad Girls," the second installation of works by women and men, brings a sense of humor to bear on feminist and gender issues. Through April 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Tracking the West: A. J. Russell Photographs of the Union Pacific Railroad" includes work from the eighteen-sixties by the official photographer of the Union Pacific Railroad. Maps and illustrated books will also be on view. . . . ¶ "The Compleat Charles Addams." Some hundred and seventy drawings and watercolors by the artist; personal memorabilia, including his drawing table; original illustrations for "The Chas Addams Mother Goose"; and life-size photographs of the movie and television characters, next to enlargements of the cartoon originals. The broad selection of Addams' cartoons are placed in thematic context. One section, "The Creative Process," features drawings in progress shown alongside the finished product. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Tabitha Vevers / Kenneth Evett—Paintings, including a series of single female figures. / Watercolors of landscapes and of still-lifes within landscapes. Opens March 19. Through April 16. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Trio—A painting apiece, circa 1960, by Ronald Bladen, James Brooks, and Elaine de Kooning. Opens March 17. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

•

Louisa Matthiasdottir—An exhibition concentrating on work that is less familiar than the artist's landscapes but that has nonetheless been a constant throughout her long career. (Matthiasdottir was born in Iceland in 1917 and has been living in New York since 1941.) A series of sculpted plaster heads (1960-61) are characterized by bare-boned angularity, and a selection of precisely orchestrated still-lifes reflects her continuing interest in the formal French tradition. Through April 12. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St.)

Sherrie Levine—Levine's entire career has been staked on copying the works of established modernist masters, all of them men—for example, Schiele, Duchamp, Rodchenko, Walker Evans, and Edward Weston. This installation, titled "Newborn," features six sandblasted cast-glass replicas of Brancusi's sculpture of the same name, each resting on a grand piano borrowed for this exhibition. Her glitzy re-creation of "Newborn" cuts against the idealistic and purifying vision that Brancusi embodied. Through April 2. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

John Alexander—Paintings in richly colored layers, of such classical subjects as fruit, overflowing banquet tables, and wildlife. Through April 2. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

William Bailey—A mini-retrospective of paintings and works on paper from 1964 to 1994. Usually restricting himself to subdued colors and matte finishes, the artist depicts bowls and other household objects on shelves or tables; this simple setup allows for a wide range of variations on a theme. His paintings balance prosaic subjects with extraordinary finesse of execution. Through April 9. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Max Beckmann (1884-1950)—Late paintings, works on paper, and sculptures in terra-cotta and bronze by the German Expressionist. Through May 14. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Enzo Cucchi—A sculpture and a number of drawings, conceived as a single work, by a member of the Italian wing of the neo-expressionists. Through March 26. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Janet Fish—Brilliant-colored, light-filled still-lifes and landscapes. Through April 2. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Ralph Goings—Photo-Realist watercolors of diner interiors, still-lifes, and pickup trucks. Through April 30. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Glenn Goldberg—Paintings on canvas and wood. Through April 2. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Marc Lambrechts—A Belgian-born painter who combines geometric form with expressive gesture. Through April 5. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Fernand Léger (1881-1955)—A show of tapestries and mosaics, focussing on the artist's well-known themes: "Les Loisirs," "Les Constructeurs," and "Les Trois Musiciens"; also, small ceramic sculptures. Through April 2. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Egon Schiele (1890-1918)—Works on paper featuring nudes, by this renowned member of the Vienna Secession. Through April 16. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Kenneth Snelson—Sculptures, from 1959 to 1993, parts of which are held in place by wires and appear to be suspended in mid-air. Through April 9. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

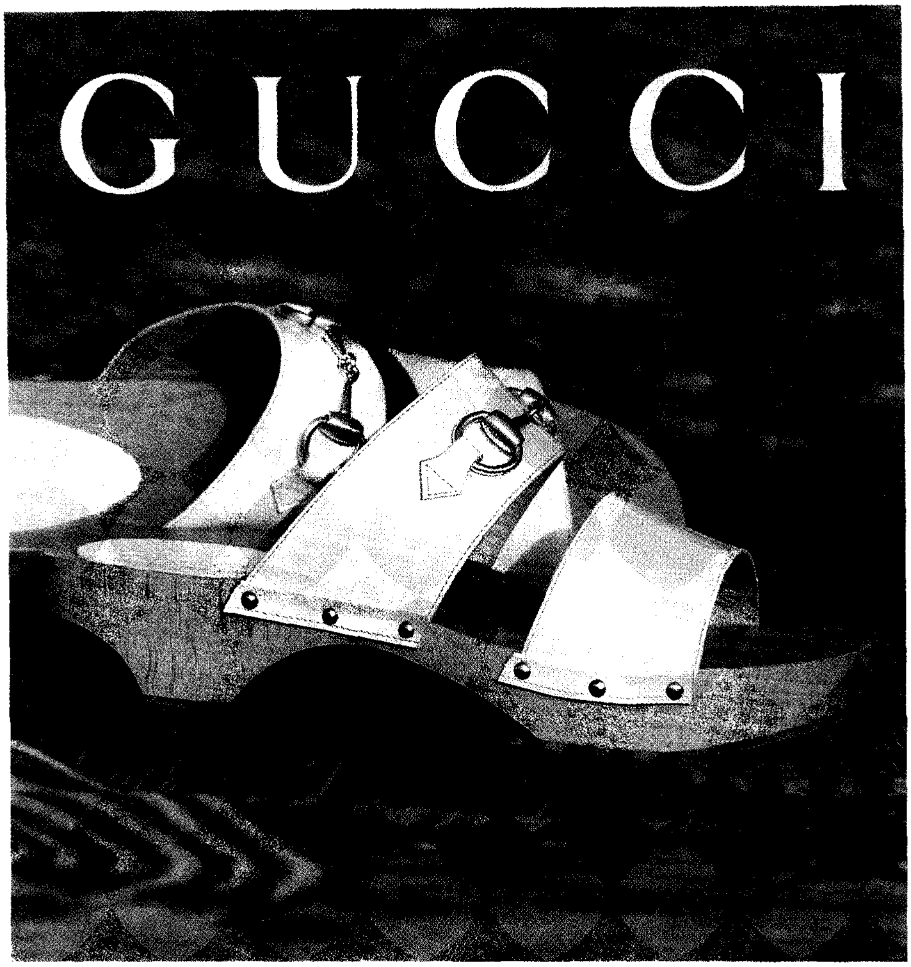
Joan Snyder—Works made with paper, in a show examining the artist's appreciation of this medium as a source of structure, texture, and subject matter. Through April 16. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

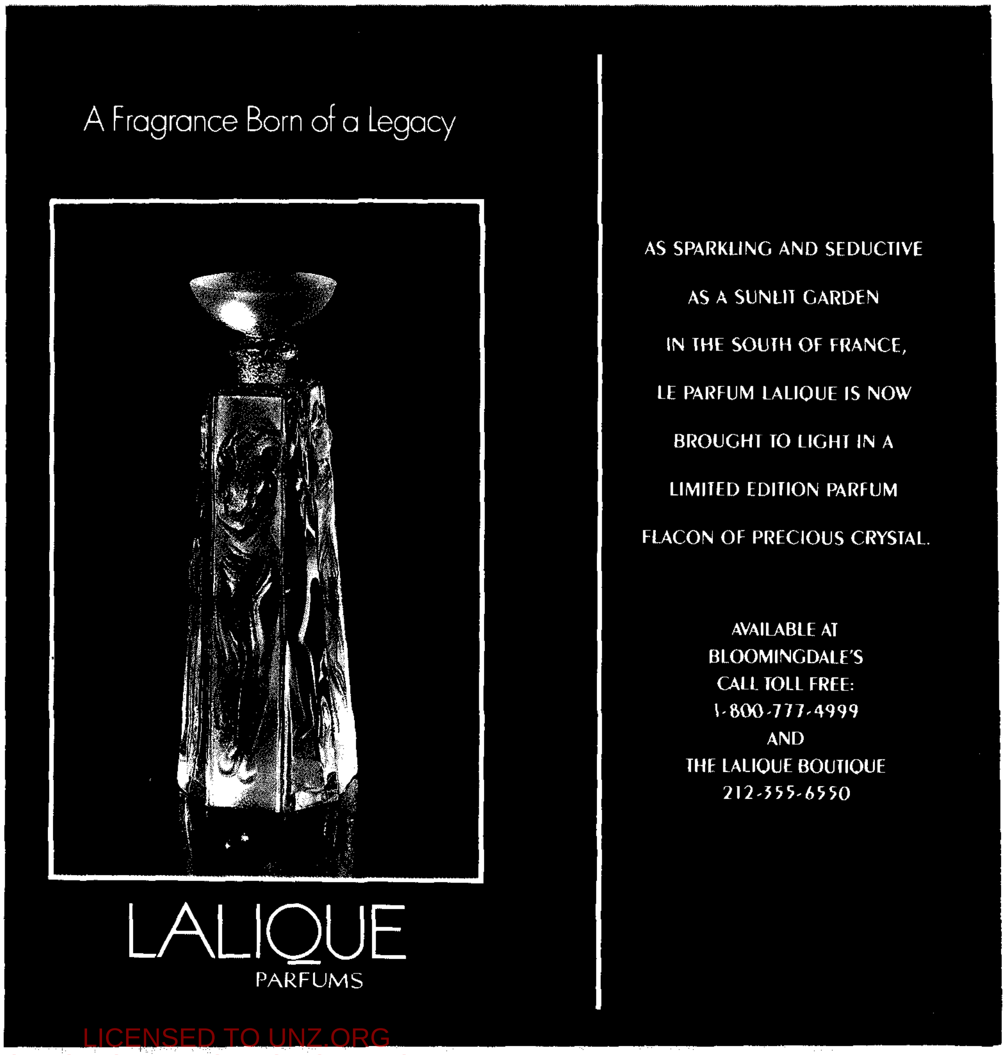
Richard Stankiewicz (1922-83) **and Jean Tinguely** (1925-91)—A show devoted to two artists who combined the humorous use of junk with a serious interest in formal sculptural issues. Through April 16. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

William Tucker—Abstract plaster and bronze sculptures. Through April 2. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Idelle Weber—The artist has produced a series of oil paintings of windswept landscapes. With her versatile brushstrokes—moving from bold swipes to velvety tendrils in the same work—and monochromatic color scheme, she departs from her previous Pop and Photo-Realist incarnations. Each moody, Turneresque view of horizon, marsh, and sky is beautifully atmospheric. Through April 2. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Alternative Visions"—French wallpapers of the nineteenth century shown alongside works by Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Carl An-

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ART—Cont'd

dre, and others, to point out their similarities. Through April 2. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"California in the '70s"—Paintings by artists living in the San Francisco Bay Area during that period, among them Richard Diebenkorn, William Wiley, and Joan Brown. Through March 30. (Frumkin/Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

"Portraits"—More than sixty portraits, ranging from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth, by Benjamin West, Childe Hassam, Philip Guston, and others. Through June 11. (IBM Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St.)

"Trees"—The tree as viewed by artists from the early modern era (Charles Burchfield) to the present (Sylvia Mangold). Through April 2. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

William Copley—Cartoonlike paintings and drawings of nymphs and satyrs. Opens March 19. Through April 30. (Nolan/Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

Matthew Feinman—Pastels and mixed-medium works, abstracted from still-lifes, landscapes, and interiors. Opens March 18. Through April 6. (Blue Mountain, 121 Wooster St. Tuesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

•

Chris Burden—Burden often experimented with real violence in his performance work of the seventies, most notoriously in "Shoot," in which he had a friend shoot him in the arm. In the last decade, the artist has removed himself from these scenarios of danger, preferring to present as elaborate toylike sculptures the disasters of modern warfare and ideology. "L.A.P.D. Uniforms" features oversized police uniforms arrayed on the four walls of the gallery in a manner that suggests cutout dolls. In the center of the gallery is a pentagonal, mirrored vitrine titled "America's Darker Moments," in which Burden has re-created such infamous events as the My Lai massacre, the Kennedy assassination, and the Kent State uprising, using flat cast-tin figures, like toy soldiers. Through March 26. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Adrian Piper—"The Hypothesis Series" (1968-1970) incorporates photos, texts, and graph paper. This series marks the transition from Piper's "pure" conceptual art of the sixties to the politically pointed investigations of race and racism for which she is now best known. "The photos were symbolic representations of the content of my consciousness at a particular space-time location," Piper writes. Through March 26. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

John Wesley—Acrylics on canvas, painted in a linear, uninflected style that strives to out-deadpan Lichtenstein. Wesley likes to paint naked women, and renders them in a studiously blank manner: pale pink bodies, lurid fucshia nipples, and matte-black hair make up the bodies that commingle against baby-blue backgrounds. Most of these paintings depict same-sex couples, with the inevitable Sapphic frisson. In one, however, a woman reclines in the foreground like a billboard odalisque, while a pudgy, bald, bespectacled man rolls around in the background. Through March 26. (Freire, 130 Prince St.)

Eric Bulatov—Paintings exploring the artist's nomadic existence since he left Russia in 1988. Through April 5. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Geneviève Cadieux—Three works using large-scale cibachromes and body casting. Through April 30. (Kent, 67 Prince St. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.)

Leonardo Drew—Large-scale sculptures made of metal, cotton, rust, and rope—materials intended to evoke African-American history. Through April 9. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Jacques Flèchemuller—Humorous paintings of figures, such as a dancer, a horseback rider, the Madonna, and General Custer. Through March 30. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Yacine Hachani—Abstract paintings. Through March 18. (Z, 70 Greene St.)

Lester Johnson—Near-monochromatic oils from the sixties, when Johnson kept a studio on the Bowery; painted over and over, the final versions coalesce into elusive figures. Through April 2. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Barbara Kruger—Photographs overlaid with text concerning social issues. Through April 30. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Ronnie Landfield—Paintings with geometric and expressionistic forms. Through April 9. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

Louise Lawler—Conceptual works. After normal gallery hours, from 7 to 10, the artist's slides can be seen through the windows, projected on the rear wall. Through March 26. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

David Rabinowitch—Floor sculptures: two recent works and two from the sixties. Through March 31. (Ikeda, 130 Prince St.)

Joseph Raffael—Large-scale watercolors based on nature, in a show focussing on two monumental diptychs of lily pads. Through April 13. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Hughie Lee-Smith—Watercolors of figures in landscapes. Through April 5. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

Ronald Searle—Original drawings and watercolors. Through May 14. (Heineman, 594 Broadway.)

Rebecca Smith—Plaster sculptures of wing shapes and imperfect spheres. Through April 2. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Michelle Stuart—Sculptures recalling ritual objects, grouped on wax-slab tables. Through April 2. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

"The Garden of Sculptural Delights"—An environmental installation by nine artists, inspired by the well-known Hieronymus Bosch painting. Through April 23. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

"Isn't It Romantic?"—Ross Bleckner, Milton Resnick, Ellen Phelan, and others. Through April 9. (On Crosby Street, 66 Crosby St.)

"Live Art"—Works in a variety of mediums, by Laurie Simmons, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Louise Lawler, and others. Through April 7. (API, 470 Broome St.)

"Witness of Existence"— A group of installations by six artists from the Obala Gallery, in Sarajevo, who were to represent the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennial last summer but were unable to leave the city due to blockades. Each work is gripping in its own way and enhanced by the dramatic setting of the Kunsthalle. Through April 3. (New York Kunsthalle, 210 E. 5th St. Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

Sign Here—Autograph hounds will find plenty to scout at Swann's auction on March 17 at 10:30. Among the documents, letters, and inscribed books are a jotting from Ulysses S. Grant ("Good joke that Bragg waits until we get up all our troops before attacking") on a battlefield letter dated Nov. 20, 1863 (estimate: $6,000-$9,000), and a complaint from Maria Callas ("very tired the end of June and had a slight nervous breakdown") in a letter to her friend Dr. Leonidas Lantzounis (estimate: $2,000-$3,000). (Swann, 104 E. 25th St. For further information, call 254-4710.)

BYO—If you're wondering about the value of that chipped teapot your grandmother handed down to you, you can find out at Christie's Free Appraisal Weekend, in which verbal appraisals are given by twenty-five of the auction firm's specialists. Previous Appraisal Weekends have turned up some startling discoveries, such as a diamond Tiffany brooch, found stashed in a closet, worth $385,000. (219 E. 67th St. March 17-18, from 1 to 5, and March 19, from 11 to 3. Each person is limited to three items.)

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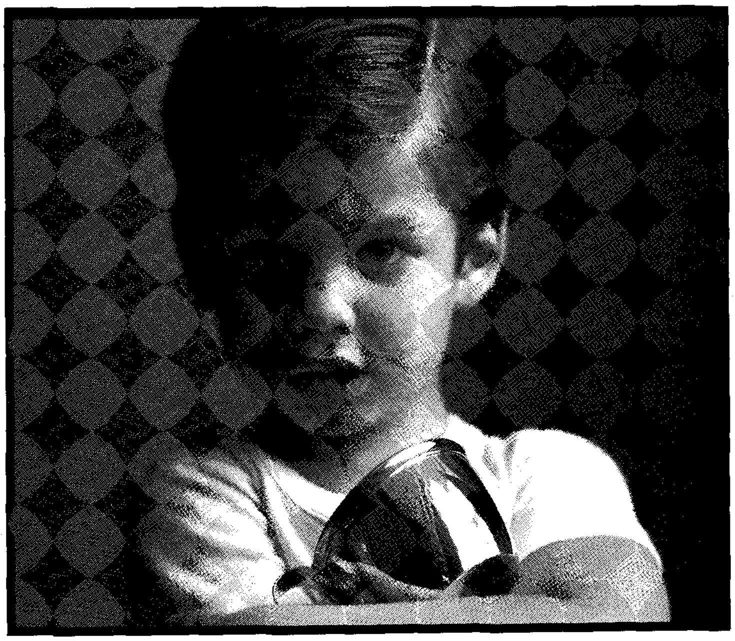

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PHOTOGRAPHY

The Formalist

JAMES VAN DER ZEE (1886-1983), whose achievement went unrecognized until late in his career, is now an acknowledged master. But he was more than an immensely talented photographer. The exhibition of his pictures of Harlem in the twenties and thirties at Greenberg (120 Wooster Street; through April 30) is, in fact, a selection from an invaluable cultural record. The thousands of photographs Van Der Zee made add substance and detail to the history of a time and a place that has become a revered touchstone of the African-American experience in New York. The period of the Harlem Renaissance is always in danger of being distorted by clichés, but Van Der Zee's pictures constitute a guide to the solid truth.

His photographs document the public life of the community: weddings, funerals, social gatherings. There are also formal photographs of residents dressed in their fashionable best. Many of these bestow a ceremonious dignity on their subjects; it is moving to see the care he took to represent his neighbors both as they were and as they wished to be seen. Van Der Zee kept working until the end of his life, and he never lost this balanced respect for the people he portrayed. Among his last pictures is an early-eighties portrait of the painter Jean-Michel Basquiat. Basquiat was often depicted as a kind of wild man, and his fury at being typed this way almost always came through in photographs. The grace, beauty, dignity, and intelligence that Basquiat radiates in Van Der Zee's picture, however, say everything about this photographer's gift.

DIETER APPELT—The first solo exhibition in New York by this German photographer and sculptor. Through April 30. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

ARTHUR ELGORT—"Models Manual," a behind-the-scenes look at the world of mega-waifs and other lanky goddesses. Through May 7. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

MITCH EPSTEIN—An exhibition by the art director of "Salaam Bombay!" and "Mississippi Masala." Through April 9. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

WALKER EVANS (1903-75)—Nine handgravures of the Brooklyn Bridge (made by Jon Goodman from Evans' negatives), which were chosen by Hart Crane to illustrate "The Bridge." Through April 16. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

DOROTHEA LANGE (1895-1965)—Forty-three extraordinary images, taken between 1933 and 1963, many of which were produced under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration. Through May 7. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

RUTH ORKIN (1921-85)—Black-and-white images by this photographer best known for her celebrity portraits. Through April 16. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

IRVING PENN—An exhibition of thirty photographs of New York, all selected by Penn, spanning forty-six years. Through April 16. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the New York Public Library.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Intersection

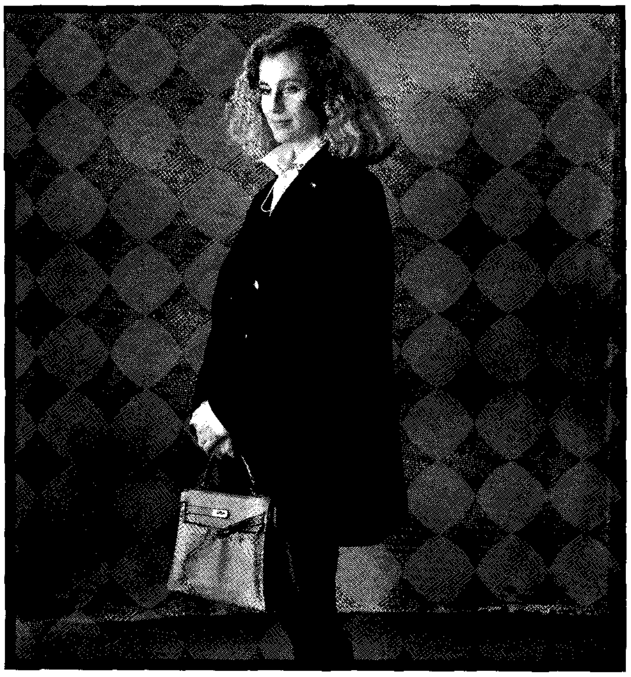
MARTHA ARGERICH and Ivo Pogorelich, two pianists who fatefully crossed paths a decade and a half ago, are scheduled to perform here this week, within three days of each other. When it comes to Argerich's bookings, however, nothing is certain; her proclivity for cancellation—sometimes at the eleventh hour—has become a part of her mystique. But it is the Argentine's playing, rather than this reputation for skittishness, that sets her apart. Ever since she won a string of major piano competitions—the Busoni and Geneva in 1957, the Warsaw Chopin in 1965—listeners have been electrified by her vigorous technique and primal energy. These qualities will be put to abundant use when—if—she performs Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 at Avery Fisher Hall, on March 18, with Charles Dutoit conducting l'Orchestre National de France.

The suspense surrounding Ivo Pogorelich comes from the fact that any event he is involved with may take a histrionic turn, as it did when the Moscow-trained Yugoslav caused a sensation at the Chopin Competition, in 1980. When the twenty-one-year-old pianist failed to advance to the finals, Argerich, who had returned to Warsaw as a judge, denounced her fellow-jurors and resigned in protest, declaring Pogorelich a genius. Since then, Pogorelich has often displayed the imaginative audacity that must have appealed to Argerich, but he projects an odd, even hostile haughtiness toward his audience. Some find this manner romantic; to others it seems ill-mannered. Pogorelich hopes to fill Carnegie Hall twice, on March 21 and March 29, with a program of Chopin's four scherzos and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition."

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES, sung in English, with Dawn Upshaw, Teresa Stratas, Heidi Grant Murphy, Rosalind Elias, and Judith Forst; conducted by Kent Nagano. (March 16 and March 19 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME**, with Angela Gheorghiu, Diana Soviero, Richard Leech, and Timothy Noble; Carlo Rizzi. (March 17 and March 22 at 8.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA**, with Susanne Mentzer, Stanford Olsen, Vladimir Chernov, Enzo Dara, and Nicolai Ghiaurov; Carlo Rizzi. (March 18 at 8.) . . . **ADRIANA LECOUVREUR**, with Mirella Freni, Stefania Toczyska, Luis Lima, and Sherrill Milnes; Roberto Abbado. (March 19 at 1:30.) . . . **OTELLO**, in the opening performance of a new production, with Carol Vaness, Plácido Domingo, and Sergei Leiferkus; Valery Gergiev. (March 21 at 7.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)



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Karen just adores her grained calfskin "Kelly" bag, created in 1930, which she received as a gift from the "special someone" in her life.

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MUSIC—Cont'd

Swedish Folkopera—Presenting Verdi's "Don Carlos," in Swedish, with English supertitles. A strange idea all around. The Stockholm-based company specializes in reducing grand opera to a chamber scale, hoping to convey dramatic intensity through attentive theatrical direction and the use of vernacular texts. "Don Carlos," one of Verdi's grandest efforts, should put their theories to the test; and at least the vernacular should ring true to Princess Christina, who will be visiting for the occasion. But wouldn't we rather see the company in "Un Ballo in Maschera," Verdi's take on an incident from Swedish history? (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. March 16 and March 18-19 at 7 and March 20 at 3.)

Amato Opera Company—Final performances of "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. March 19 at 7:30 and March 20 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. March 16 at 8: Schumann's Symphony No. 2 and Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Maurizio Pollini). . . . ¶ March 17, March 19, and March 21, all at 8; and March 18 at 11 A.M.: Mozart's Symphony No. 29, Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2 (featuring the orchestra's concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow), and Schumann's Symphony No. 2.

Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra—Leonard Slatkin conducts Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis," the New York première of William Bolcom's "Lyric Concerto" for flute and orchestra (featuring James Galway), Mr. Galway's arrangement of a fantasy on themes from Bizet's "Carmen," and Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben." (Carnegie Hall. March 16 at 8.)

St. Ignatius Loyola Choir and Orchestra—Kent Tritle directs Bach's "St. John Passion," with soloists Neil Farrell (tenor, as the Evangelist), Michael Dash (baritone), Maureen Haley Scott (soprano), Nancy Wertsch (mezzo-soprano), Mark Bleeke (tenor), and Arizeder Urreiztieta (bass). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. March 16 at 8.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts twentieth-century works of a decidedly tonal persuasion: Rodion Shchedrin's "Carmen Suite"; a movement from Thomson's Concertino for Harp, Strings, and Percussion; Barber's Adagio for Strings; and (with pianist Anthony de Mare) Lou Harrison's Piano Concerto and the "Masque" movement from Bernstein's Symphony No. 2. (Alice Tully Hall. March 17 at 7:30.)

Orchestre National de France—Charles Dutoit conducts Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2," Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Martha Argerich), and Debussy's "La Mer." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 18 at 8.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducts a Baroque program comprising works by Pietro Locatelli, Johann Friedrich Fasch, Jan Dismas Zelenka, and Vivaldi. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 19 at 7.)

Gregg Smith Singers—Performing Renaissance madrigals and their descendents, up through the age of blues and doo-wop. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. March 19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.)

Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra—Vassily Sinaisky conducts Mussorgsky's "Dawn on the Moscow River" (from "Khovanshina"), Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Vladimir Viardo), and Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 20 at 3.)

American Composers Orchestra—Paul Lustig Dunkel conducts Thea Musgrave's "Rainbow," Rorem's "Sun" (featuring soprano Marla Berg), Henri Lazarof's Divertimento No. 3 (featuring violinist Ani Kavafian), and the première of Ge Gan-ru's "Chinese Rhapsody." (Carnegie Hall. March 20 at 3. . . . NOTE: The four composers will participate in a pre-concert discussion at 1:45, open to ticket holders.)

Carissimi Concert—Louise Basbas directs sacred music by the seventeenth-century Roman master, including mass movements, motets, and his oratorio "Jephte." Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. March 20 at 4.)

Trinity Choir and Orchestra—Owen Burdick directs Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," with period instruments; soloists include tenor Stanley Warren (as the Evangelist), bass Curtis Streetman, soprano Andrea Matthews, countertenor Thomas Mark Fallon, tenor Mark Bleeke, and bass-baritone Jan Opalach. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. 602-0873. March 20 at 4.)

Horizon Chorale and Orchestra—Gail Archer directs Ockeghem's "Missa Cuiusvis Toni," excerpts from Penderecki's "St. Luke Passion," and Schubert's Stabat Mater. (Church of the Epiphany, Second Ave. at 22nd St. 475-1966. March 20 at 5.)

Central City Chorus—Charles Pilling directs Fauré's Requiem and "Cantique de Jean Racine," as well as Duruflé's "Four Motets on Gregorian Themes" and "Messe 'Cum Jubilo.'" (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. 838-0808. March 20 at 7.)

Orchester der Beethovenhalle Bonn—Dennis Russell Davies conducting. March 20 at 7:30: Viktor Ullmann's "Slavic Rhapsody" (featuring saxophonist Harry Kinross White), Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Vladimir Feltsman), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ March 21 at 7:30: Heinz Winbeck's "Lenau Phantasie," Wuorinen's Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra (featuring the Rascher Saxophone Quartet), Schnittke's Piano Concerto (with Mr. Feltsman), and Philip Glass's Concerto for Three Ensembles. (Alice Tully Hall.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller directs light fare; featuring Holly Near and the Flirtations. (Carnegie Hall. March 20 at 8.)

Saint Thomas Choir and Concert Royal—Gerre Hancock directs Haydn's "Little Organ" Mass and Mozart's "Coronation" Mass, plus a Mozart epistle sonata; with soloists Kathryn Domoney (soprano), Christopher Trueblood (countertenor), Mark Bleeke (tenor), Glendower Jones (baritone), and Peter Stoltzfus (organist) joining the choir and period-instrument ensemble. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013, ext. 3003. March 22 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

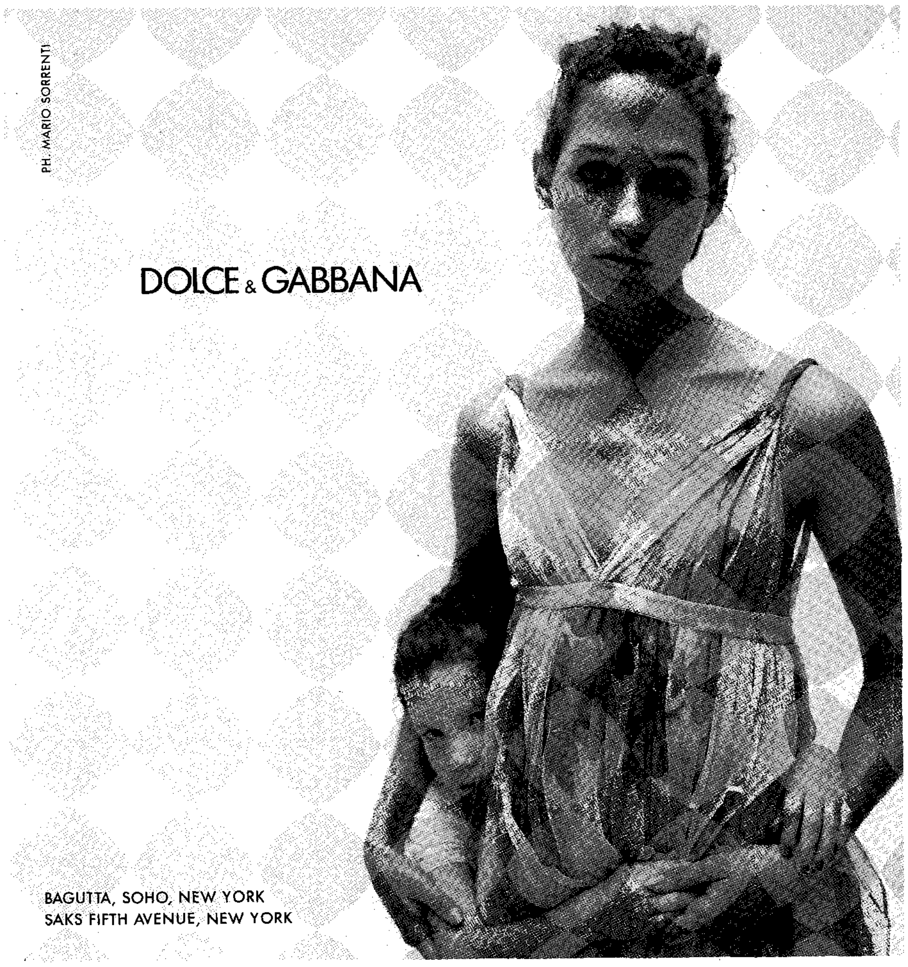
Barros Classical Consort—The period-instrument piano trio performs Boccherini's six piano trios (Op. 12) published in 1781. (Weill Recital Hall. March 16 at 8.)

Renée Krimsier—Flutist, performing sonatas by Poulenc and Carl Reinecke, Bach's A-Minor Solo Partita, Georges Hüe's Fantaisie, and the première of Barbara Kolb's "Turnabout"; with pianist Deborah DeWolf Emery. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 16 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting the Brentano String Quartet in quartets by György Kurtág (his "Officium Breve"), Haydn (in D Major, Op. 71, No. 2), and Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 135). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 17 at 7:30 and March 20 at 4.)

New York Philomusica—Performing Britten's "Phantasy Quartet" and Harbison's "Snow Country" (both for oboe and strings), a Haydn cassation, and Bruckner's F-Major String Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 17 at 8.)

Japanese Music Festival—Jointly presented by the Asia Society and the Japanese Federation of Composers. March 18 at 7: A lecture by composer Teizo Matsumura. . . . ¶ March 18 at



BBC Video's Atlantic Crossing

BBC—The very appearance of these three letters on a television program virtually guarantees a level of quality all too seldom attained in shows produced on these shores.

With the success of countless programs it exports, BBC has become the largest producer of television programming in the world. In fact, its global reach extends to radio, film, books, magazines, and product merchandising as well. Sarah Frank, President and Chief Executive Officer of BBC Lionheart Television, estimates, "We provide U.S. television with approximately five hundred hours of programming a year to satisfy the diverse tastes of the American television audience."

This is no idle boast. BBC product has become a staple of American television, supplying a large portion of the programming utilized by the broadcast and cable communities, including PBS, A&E, The Discovery Channel, Comedy Central, SciFi Channel, Bravo, and TBS.

BBC's large number of Emmys, CableACE and Peabody Awards offer ample evidence of the level of quality achieved in its output. The secret: BBC productions draw from the same talent pool that nourishes the British theatre and film industries. That is why many of their programs offer strong competition for even the best Hollywood feature films.

Skeptics need only look at the roster of today's top stars who made seminal film appearances in BBC programs: Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson, John Cleese, Michael Palin, Daniel Day-Lewis, Miranda Richardson, and Ben Kingsley, to name but a few. And BBC vehicles attract top-flight talent from behind the camera as well, including Academy Award-winning director John Schlesinger (*A Question of Attribution* and *An Englishman Abroad*) and such celebrated writers as Dennis Potter (*Christabel*) and Simon Gray (*After Pilkington*).

These days, American devotees of BBC programming could go mad trying to videotape every one of the programs currently playing across the country. Fortunately, they don't have to—CBS/Fox Video has been distributing the best of BBC for more than seven years now, and its catalog continues to expand. "If ever programming existed that lends itself to repeat viewings," says Mindy Pickard, CBS/Fox's Vice President of Marketing, "it's the various BBC series that we offer on video. Their quality has made them increasingly popular among a large number of video collectors."

Advertisement

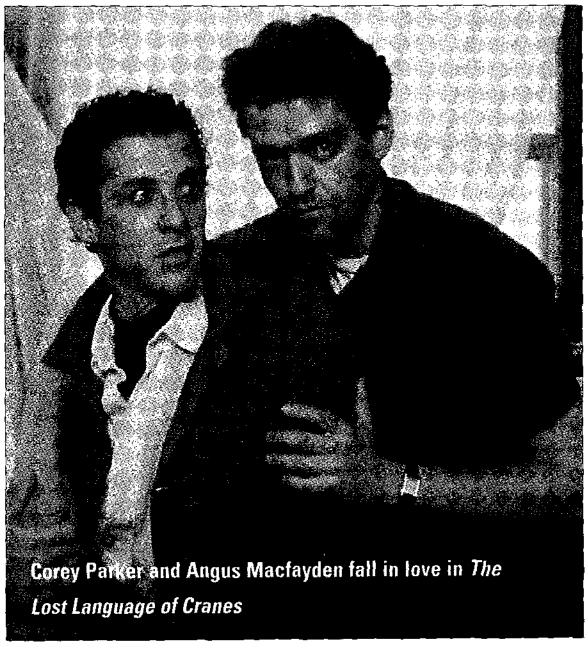
BBC has displayed its versatility by producing

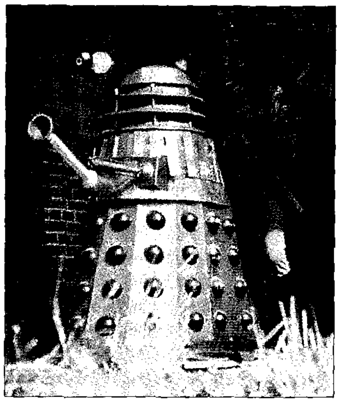
John Cleese as the inimitable Basil Fawlty in *Fawlty Towers*

THERE is little doubt that BBC's concentration on program diversity has helped propel it to the forefront of television production over the last twenty years. The strategy has been simple and straightforward: approach a genre, distill its best elements, add a uniquely British sensibility and novelty of treatment, and then find top-flight cast and crew to realize the programs most effectively.

BBC achieved notable success early on with its comedy programming, which by the late '60s had far outpaced America's predictable, sappy sitcoms with such surreal, iconoclastic standard bearers as *Monty Python's Flying Circus.* When the BBC comedies finally made their way across the Atlantic, they were quickly lauded by U.S. critics and viewers alike for their freshness and audacity.

***The Lost Language of Cranes* drew initial raves and popular acclaim on both television and home video**


Corey Parker and Angus Macfayden fall in love in *The Lost Language of Cranes*


Every fan's favorite alien, the Dalek from *Doctor Who*

Even within the comedy genre, BBC has displayed its versatility again and again by producing series that appeal to all ages and comedic tastes. *Are you Being Served?*, *Yes, Prime Minister,* and *One Foot in the Grave,* for example, are specifically aimed at the over-40 set, while *The Young Ones, The Dangerous Brothers,* and *Red Dwarf* appeal to younger, hipper viewers. Other programs, such as *Fawlty Towers* and *Black Adder,* demonstrate widespread appeal, cutting across different age groups. Most of all, the shows all share characteristics that distinguish the best humor programming: sharp writing, clever characterizations, and superlative performances.

The same virtues are found in BBC's dramas. From miniseries to feature-length films, the company consistently presents the finest dramatic programs seen on television, as fans of such prestigious anthology series as *Masterpiece Theater, Great Performances,* and *Mystery!* already know. Whether sensitive, thoughtful explorations of the human condition, complex, suspenseful thrillers, or gripping tales of espionage and intrigue, BBC's dramatic productions are easily recognizable by their sound scripting, taut direction, top production values, a[illegible] scrupulous attention to detail.

This reputation for high quality programming has enabled BBC to approach delicate subjects that, in lesser hands, might be sabotaged by sensationalistic or haphazard treatment. Few producers would relish tackling *The Lost Language of Cranes,* a sensitive, low-key look at homosexuality and male bonding which drew initial raves and popular acclaim on both television and home video.

EVEN the venerable whodunit, long ago sapped of potency by endless repetition of hoary old cliches, has gotten a new lease on life in BBC's impeccably faithful adaptations of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple stories (*A Pocketful of Rye, A Murder Is Announced* and *The Body In the Library*). And stories of espionage which frequently lend themselves to over-the-top melodramatics are carefully developed by BBC's writers, who fully understand the

Rowan Atkinson as the villainous Edmond Blackadder

series that appeal to all different ages and tastes

Daniel Day-Lewis deals with the horrors of war in *How Many Miles to Babylon?*

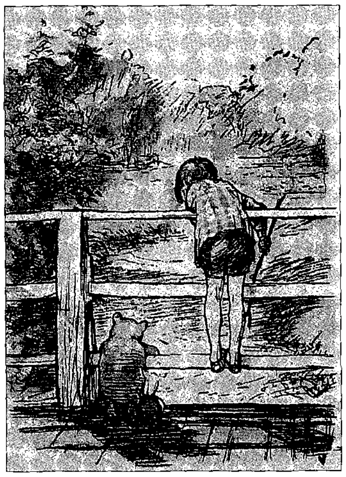
benefits of understatement and verisimilitude. *A Perfect Spy, A Question of Attribution,* and *An Englishman Abroad* may not have the car chases, explosions, or femmes fatale, but they exude danger and urgency seldom found in other spy films.

Of course, the common thread running through all BBC's dramas is the uniform excellence of the actors, many of them top stars of stage and screen, including Daniel Day-Lewis, Kenneth Branagh, Miranda Richardson, Lauren Bacall, Alec Guinness, Emma Thompson, Peter O'Toole, James Fox, and Alan Bates, to name a few.

BBC has also developed some of its own stars, including the seven actors who have played the lead in *Doctor Who*, the longest-running (since 1963) science-fiction series in TV history. All of the Doctor's portrayers have been idolized by the show's rabid cult of fans, and their delightful interpretations add zest and personality to a show already rich in style and innovation.

Hardly content to rest on its laurels, or fall back on mundane stories of alien invaders or bug-eyed monsters beneath the earth's surface, BBC subsequently "pushed the envelope" with the hugely successful, irreverent, genre-bending romps, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Red Dwarf.*

BBC's continued commitment to fresh, exciting new shows extends to family programming as well. BBC plans to significantly expand its production in this arena over the coming years. And, unlike the typical Saturday-morning fare on American television, BBC's family-oriented series and specials are produced with the same dedication to quality that's routinely applied to adult-oriented programs. That quality has been clearly evident in such enchanting, delightful programs as *The Secret Garden, Little Women, Pollyanna, Merlin of the Crystal Cave, Winnie the Pooh, Rupert the Bear,* and *Gulliver in Lilliput.*



The classic children's favorite, *Winnie the Pooh*

BBC's dramatic productions are easily recognizable by their sound scripting, taut direction, top production values, and scrupulous attention to detail

Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson in the World War II epic, *Fortunes of War*

Timothy Dalton and Zelah Clarke embrace in *Jane Eyre*

Advertisement

The Essential BBC Home Video Library

Fawlty Towers. CBS/Fox offers the complete run of this witty, acerbic, and delightfully zany comedy hit from the '70s. *Monty Python* alumnus John Cleese stars as Basil Fawlty, the dyspeptic proprietor of a small English hostelry. Always scheming to outwit his wife (played by Prunella Scales), his employees (Andrew Sachs, Connie Booth), or eccentric guests who plague him, the harried, hapless Basil usually finishes up second best. Available on four cassettes, sold separately; or *The Complete Fawlty Towers* gift set.

Black Adder. One of the BBC's most popular, raucous, and inventive comedy series stars Rowan Atkinson as delightfully demented Edmund Blackadder, a likable rogue who plies his villainous trade over a period of many centuries. *Black Adder I* is set in the Dark Ages; *Black Adder II* finds Lord Edmund in the Elizabethan Age; *Black Adder III* takes place during the 18th century; and, *Black Adder Goes Forth* in uniform during World War I to do his best for Queen and country—and for himself, too. Available on eight cassettes, sold separately.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. If you're planning a vacation through the cosmos, you'll certainly need to reference this hilariously offbeat traveler's guide, adapted from the best-selling book by Douglas Adams. Mild-mannered Englishman Arthur Dent joins his neighbor (an alien) Ford Prefect, for some galactic gallivanting that takes them across time and space. Package includes all six uproarious episodes of this highly acclaimed series.

Doctor Who. CBS/Fox has released 40 episodes of this classic science-fiction series and additional episodes are released quarterly. Ride through time and space with the Doctor and his friends in his miracle machine, the Tardis, en route to fascinating, fantastic exploits. Whether doing battle with 15th-century cultists or futuristic Daleks, Doctor Who always provides the best in imaginative adventure. Best selling episodes include *The Five Doctors, Shada* and *The Tomb of the Cybermen.*

All Creatures Great and Small. This 1986 feature film, based on James Herriot's autobiographical best-selling book, is a gentle drama about a young animal lover (played by Christopher Timothy) who returns to rural England after serving in World War II only to find it difficult to adjust to peacetime conditions. Aided by his devoted wife (Carol Drinkwater) and two partners (Robert Hardy and Peter Davison), he finds purpose and serenity in his work as a veterinarian. This well-received feature spawned an equally popular TV series.

The Red Dwarf. BBC's cosmic comedy saga enjoys an enthusiastic cult following on both sides of the Atlantic. These are the voyages of the mining ship Red Dwarf, whose mission is to get back to Earth for a good scrubbing. Its crew is comprised of the sloppiest space slugs and outer-space oddballs ever collected in one craft, led by the inimitable Arnold Rimmer. Series one through four are available on eight cassettes.

Jane Eyre. Charlotte Bronte's immortal tale of mystery and romance receives lush treatment in this highly praised, handsomely mounted BBC adaptation. British stage star Zelah Clarke plays Jane Eyre, an orphaned girl who grows to womanhood relying on her intelligence and her independence. While working for the enigmatic Rochester (Timothy Dalton), Jane experiences happiness she's never known, only to find it endangered by dark forces she's never experienced.

Are You Being Served? Laughter is one commodity that's always in ample supply at the Grace Brothers department store. Mollie Sugden, Trevor Bannister, Frank Thornton, John Inman, Wendy Richard, Arthur Brough, and Nicholas Smith form the talented ensemble cast. It features the same sharp scripting, skewed sensibilities, and droll dialogue delivery that have become hallmarks of the British comedy. Two tapes, each featuring three full length episodes, are available from CBS/Fox.

Pride and Prejudice. A lush, meticulously produced adaptation of Jane Austen's witty, romantic novel. Filmed on location in the beautiful English countryside, it depicts 19th-century life with BBC's usual fidelity to period detail. Elizabeth Garvie and David Rintoul headline this absorbing, amusing story of five husband-hunting sisters among the British gentry. CBS/Fox has released two other Austen adaptations from the BBC: *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park.*

The Secret Garden. Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic children's story comes to life in this charming, sensitive adaptation. Recently orphaned Mary Lennox is shunted off to live with her uncle at his dreary estate on the Yorkshire moors. The willful, spoiled Mary undergoes a metamorphosis after coming across her deceased aunt's secret garden, and wonders if exposure to it wouldn't do the same for her gloomy, bedridden cousin. This beautifully packaged cassette sports a specially commissioned illustration by famed artist Graham Rust.

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8: Songs and chamber music by Matsumura, featuring soprano Barbara Martin, koto player Kazue Sawai, and the Cassatt String Quartet, among others. . . . ¶ March 19 at 5: Works by Tadao Sawai, Watazumido, Ichiro Higo, Mamoru Fujieda, and Hinoharu Matsumoto, for traditional Japanese instruments and chant as well as modern electronics. . . . ¶ March 20 at 2: Several of the featured composers discuss the juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary elements in Japanese music. . . . ¶ March 20 at 5: Music spotlighting the guitar, by Akira Miyoshi, Yoriaki Matsudaira, Toru Takemitsu, Hikaru Hayashi, Akemi Naito, Katori Makino, and Shoko Suzuki; with guitarists Mikio Hoshido and William Anderson. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.)

Jorma Hynninen—The Finnish baritone performs songs by Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers, and other American tunesmiths; with pianist Heikki Sarmanto. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. March 18 at 8. For information about tickets, call 307-7171.)

Arianna Goldina and Rémy Loumbrozo—The duo-pianists perform works by Walton (his "Façade," narrated by Janet Bookspan), Bartók, Liszt, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. March 19 at 2.)

Winslow Browning—The classical guitarist is joined by colleagues for chamber music by Adam Falckenhagen, Astor Piazzolla, Mauro Giuliani, and Radamès Gnattali. (Weill Recital Hall. March 19 at 5:30.)

John Williams—The classical guitarist performs transcriptions of works by Albéniz, de Falla, and Agustín Barrios-Mangore. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 19 at 8.)

Orion String Quartet—Performing quartets by Weill, Haydn (in F Minor, Op. 55, No. 2), and Brahms (in A Minor). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. March 20 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Gone Fishin'—Pianist Robert Kapilow and colleagues play and discuss Schubert's "Trout" Quintet. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 20 at 3.)

An Die Musik—Performing a Haydn Quintet, Beethoven's C-Minor String Trio, Bruce Adolphe's Oboe Quartet, and Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 20 at 4.)

Marsha Heather Long—Organist, playing music by Bach, Dupré (his "Symphonie-Passion"), Julius Reubke ("Sonata on the Ninety-fourth Psalm"), and Vierne (three improvisations, as reconstructed by Duruflé). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. March 20 at 4.)

Coull String Quartet—Performing works by Mendelssohn, Walton, and Dvořák (his G-Major String Quintet, with double bassist James VanDemark assisting). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 20 at 5.)

You Be The Judge—This upstairs concert venue hosts a salon-size music competition in which the audience is invited to adjudicate the performers—to what good it is hard to imagine. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. March 20 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Jennifer Larmore—In her New York début recital, the mezzo-soprano performs a wide-ranging program of songs by Handel, Rossini, Fauré, Giuseppe Martucci, Obradors, and others; with pianist Dalton Baldwin. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 21 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Ivo Pogorelich—Pianist, performing Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" and Chopin's four scherzos (plus a prelude). (Carnegie Hall. March 21 at 8. . . . **note:** The program will be repeated on March 29.)

Jacob Lateiner—The pianist, especially drawn to works by contemporary composers (having introduced major pieces by Carter and Sessions) and by Beethoven, has programmed some "personal favorites"; Beethoven's first and last sonatas (Op. 2, No. 1, and Op. 111), and shorter works by Chopin, Schubert, and Schumann. (Juilliard Theatre, 165 W. 65th St. March 21 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Galatea Ensemble—The chamber orchestra splits into small ensembles to play Bach's Third "Brandenburg" Concerto, Miriam Gideon's "Lyric Piece for String Quartet," Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel," and Janáček's "Mládi." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Meridian String Quartet and Dena Levine—Performing Dvořák's Piano Quintet, in an informal concert. (Turtle Bay Music School, 244 E. 52nd St. 753-8811. March 22 at 7:30.)

Gil Shaham—The violinist plays sonatas by Mozart (in A Major, K. 305), Brahms (his Third), and Debussy, as well as works by Korngold and Sarasate; with pianist Rohan De Silva. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 22 at 8.)

Cosmopolitan Chamber Players—Performing chamber music by Mozart, Beethoven (his "Ghost" Trio), and Brahms (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). (Merkin Concert Hall. March 22 at 8.)

New Millennium Ensemble—Performing works by Sessions, David Dzubay, Dallapiccola (his "Goethe Lieder"), and Martino (his "Notturno"). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 22 at 8.)

ANDREA VENTURA

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MOSCHINO

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Emerald Isle—Pin on your "Kiss Me I'm Irish" button and join two million other spectators for the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, which has been staged here since 1762. On March 17 at 11, Grand Marshal Tom Manton, who doubles as a congressman, will lead a hundred and fifty thousand participants north on Fifth Ave., from 44th St. to 86th St., and then east to Third Ave. . . . ¶ At 9 A.M. there's an alternative march led by the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization. Meets on the steps of the New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. . . . ¶ Big Onion Walking Tours will guide you through historic Irish New York. March 19 at 1: The former Little Ireland in lower Manhattan. . . . March 20 at 11: Irish Ellis Island. (For more information, call 439-1090.)

It's a Jungle Out There—It's time to join the circus. Or, at least, greet the elephants, camels, horses, and llamas of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. They emerge on March 23 at 1 A.M. from the midtown tunnel on their early-morning stroll to Madison Square Garden, where they'll settle in for a five-week stint.

Over Easy—According to Chinese tradition, balancing an egg on end on the first day of spring will provide you with an entire year of luck. There will be a demonstration on March 20 at 3:28 P.M., the hour of the vernal equinox. Some three hundred and fifty eggs will be provided, but you're welcome to bring your own. (Battery Park City, Hudson River Park, Vesey St. at the river.) . . . ¶ The Urban Park Rangers will give a free talk, on March 20 at 2, about the equinox, when the day has equal hours of light and dark. Meets at Central Park West at 100th St.

Feeling Flautish?—The New York Flute Club will present a daylong flute fair with exhibits, master classes, clinics, choirs, and a competition. Jean-Pierre Rampal will conclude the day's events with a concert. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. March 19, from 8 to 8. To register, call 757-8339.)

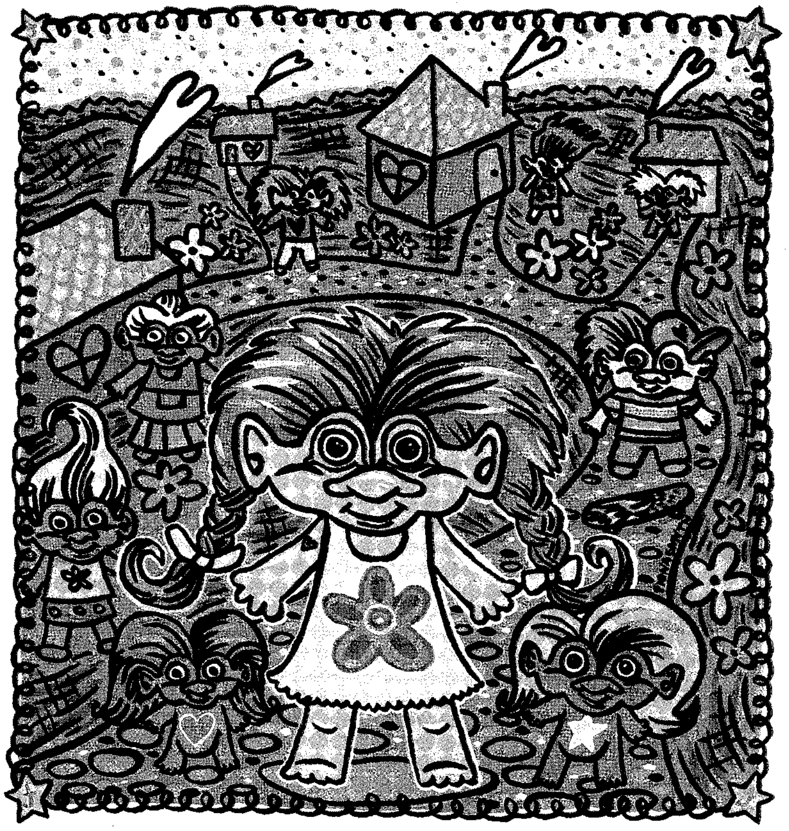
To Market, to Market—The Spring Crafts Market will include blown glass, ceramics, and jewelry, by more than a hundred and twenty exhibitors. (Wollman Auditorium, Ferris Booth Hall, Broadway at 115th St. March 18, from 2 to 7, and March 19-20, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.) . . . ¶ The Main Waiting Room at Grand Central Terminal is home to a spring market, featuring wicker baskets, Easter bonnets, plants, and garden furniture. (Mondays through Saturdays, from 10 to 7. Through April 23.)

The Red and the Black—The Jewish Museum will present a day of films and panel discussions about blacklisting and the media in the United States and the former U.S.S.R. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. March 20, from 10 to 8. 423-3234.)

Black Cinema—Film directors (among them Spike Lee and Jonathan Demme) and scholars (including Houston Baker and Stanley Crouch) will explore the contributions of black filmmakers, in a conference opening March 22. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. Call 998-7787 for a series pass to more than twenty panels and film screenings. Through March 30.)

Shea's Arena—Lisa Shea will read from her first novel, the recently published "Hula," about two girls growing up in the sixties in Virginia. With Carole Maso, who will read selections from her own fiction. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. March 18 at 8. For more information, call 875-4128.)

Musical Notes—March 16 at 6:30: Stanley Crouch will talk about the jazz musician's life on the road. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St. 721-6500.) . . . ¶ March 20 at 2: Composers discuss tradition and innovation in Japanese music. (Asia Society, 725 Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742). . . ¶ March 22 at 2:30: Gunther Schuller will talk about Louis Armstrong's nineteen-thirties big band. (Hubbard Recital Hall, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Tickets at the door on the day of the talk.)



Troll Village at the Children's Museum.

FIONA SMYTH

Readings—March 20 at 4: Li-Young Lee will read from his poetry. (Chinatown History Museum, 70 Mulberry St. 619-4785.) . . . ¶ March 21 at 7:30: William Gibson and Jack Womack will read from their own science fiction. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ March 21 at 8: Playwrights Craig Lucas and Terrence McNally will read from their own work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 22 at 7:30: Nina Cassian, Phillis Levin, Mario Suško, and others will read from their own poetry, in conjunction with the Kunsthalle gallery's "Witnesses of Existence" show, which continues here through April 3. (210 E. 5th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ March 22 at 7:30: Francine du Plessix Gray will read from her new biography of Louise Colet. (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—March 16 at 7:30: J. P. Donleavy will talk about his new book, "The History of the Gingerman." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 17 at 6:15: Karen Finley. (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison at 75th St. 606-0211.) . . . ¶ March 20 at 8: Lani Guinier will interview Anna Deavere Smith. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 21 at 8:15: Merce Cunningham will talk with dance critic Deborah Jowitt. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 22 at 6: Daniel Kevles will talk about cancer. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Trolls—You won't hear anyone speaking in hushed tones at the Children's Museum of Manhattan; delighted shrieks are more like it, especially in the Troll Village, which has three interconnected huts that kids can climb in and out of through stairs, tunnels, and bridges. Included in the Village are plenty of well-loved troll dolls to play with. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234. Museum hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 1:30 to 5:30; Fridays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Famous People Players—The Canadian troupe of puppeteers begins a four-week engagement. Expect to see life-size puppet likenesses of Elvis, Liberace, Tina Turner, and others. Recommended ages: five and older. (Belasco Theatre, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3. Through April 10.)

Author, Author—Fran Lebowitz, who once wrote that "children make the most desirable opponents in Scrabble as they are both easy to beat and fun to cheat," will read Kay Thompson's "Eloise." (Ms. Lebowitz has a book for kids coming out in the fall.) Julia Hoban and her mother, Lillian Hoban, will read from their own works. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. March 20 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Lolli-Pops Concert—Haydn's "Toy" Symphony and other works, played by the Little Orchestra Society. Recommended ages: three to five. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. March 19 at 10:30 and 11:45 and March 20 at 12:30 and 1:45.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Milwaukee Bucks, March 17 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Celtics, March 19 at 1. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Bulls, March 22 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Los Angeles Clippers, March 22 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, March 16. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, March 18. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, March 20 at 7:10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Tampa Bay Lightning, March 22 at 7:40.

Devils—Away until March 24, when they'll face the Tampa Bay Lightning.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

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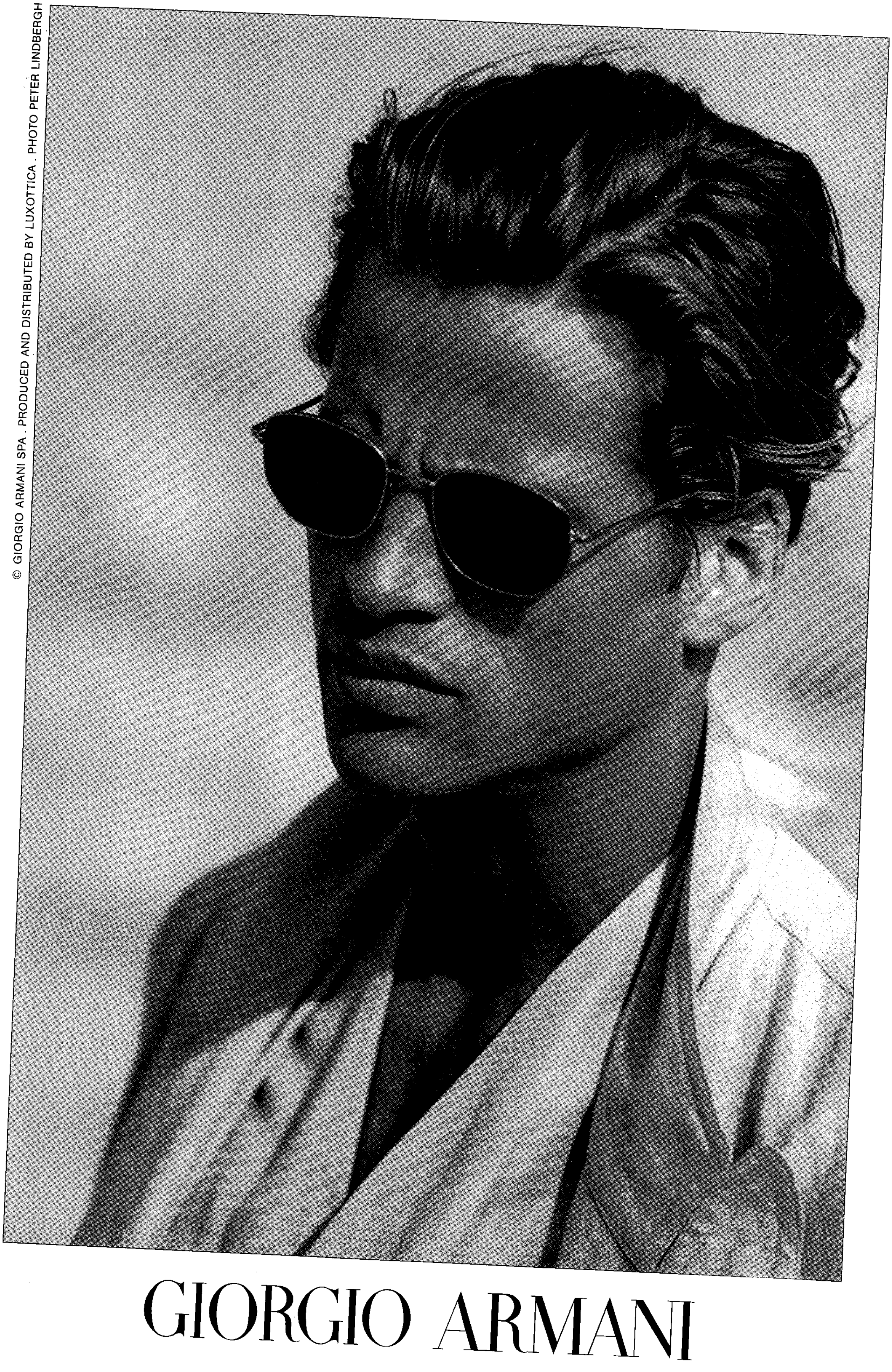
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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 17: "The Snapper" (*directed by* Stephen Frears), *with* Colm Meaney. From March 18: "Suture" (Scott McGehee and David Siegal).
Theatre 3: "The Cement Garden" (Andrew Birkin).
Theatre 4: "Savage Nights" (†).
Theatre 5: "Sirens" (John Duigan).
Theatre 6: "Naked" (Mike Leigh).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through March 17: "H. M. Pullman" (1941, King Vidor) and "Comrade X" (1940, Vidor). From March 18: "Oh, Woe Is Me" (Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).
Theatre 2: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 3: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 2: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "Angie" (†).
Theatre 5: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer), with Paul Hogan and Cuba Goodings, Jr.
Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin).
Theatre 7: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Raining Stones" (Ken Loach).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Ref" (Ted Demme), with Denis Leary, Judy Davis, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner); and "China Moon" (†).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 4: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).
Theatre 5: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).
Theatre 6: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).
Theatre 7: "Fiorile" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), *with* Hugh Grant *and* Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer), with Paul Hogan and Cuba Goodings, Jr.
Theatre 4: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).
Theatre 5: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 6: "China Moon" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "The Ref" (Ted Demme), with Denis Leary, Judy Davis, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 3: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 4: "Angie" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "China Moon" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer), with Paul Hogan, Cuba Goodings, Jr., and Beverly D'Angelo.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Ref" (Ted Demme), with Denis Leary, Judy Davis, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: "The Ref."

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

"LOVE, LOVE, AMORE AND SPAGHETTI"
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THE MOVIES

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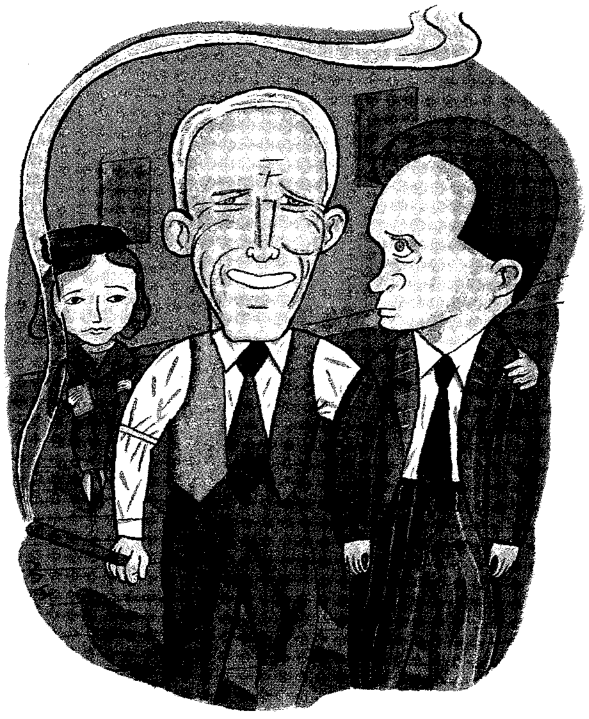
20	21	22				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 49.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).
Theatre 2: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer), with Paul Hogan and Cuba Goodings, Jr.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger).
Theatre 2: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).



At the Tower East, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Paul Newman, and Tim Robbins in "The Hudsucker Proxy."

MARCELLUS HALL

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Angie" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 17: "China Moon" (†). From March 18: "Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Hudsucker Proxy" (Joel Coen).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through March 17: "China Moon" (†).
From March 18: "Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (Peter Segal).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.
Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 2: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 3: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 5: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer), *with Paul Hogan and Cuba Goodings, Jr.*
Theatre 7: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Angie" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Ref" (Ted Demme), with Denis Leary, Judy Davis, and Kevin Spacey.

WEST SIDE

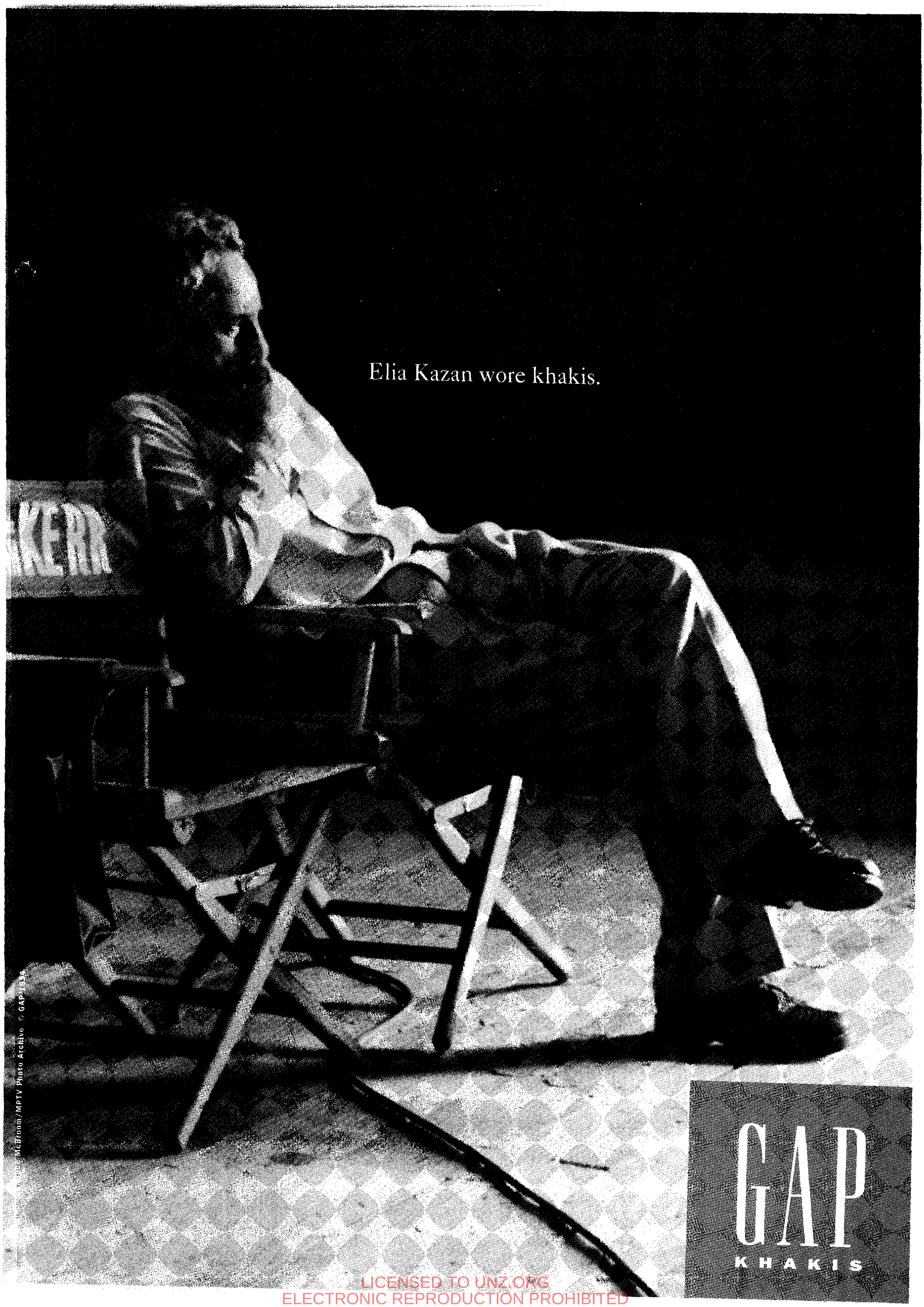
Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl" (directed by Ray Müller; in German).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Three films by Leni Riefenstahl. Through March 20: "Triumph of the Will" (1934), a documentary. . . . ¶ March 21-22: "The Blue Light" (1932) and "Tiefland" (1942).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, in Mandarin).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 17: A program of short films from "The 24th International Tournée of Animation." From March 18: "Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski).
Theatre 4: "Calendar" (Atom Egoyan).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.



Elia Kazan wore khakis.
KERR
GAP
KHAKIS
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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

Theatre 5: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).
Theatre 6: "Angie" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).
Theatre 8: "Schindler's List" (†)
Theatre 9: "Reality Bites" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "The Getaway" (Roger Donaldson).
Theatre 3: "Sugar Hill."

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Angie" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: "Addams Family Values" (Barry Sonnenfeld), with Anjelica Huston and Raul Julia.
Theatre 3: "The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).

At the Cinema Village, Ken Loach's "Raining Stones."

Theatre 4: "The Three Musketeers" (Stephen Herek).
Theatre 5: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein).
Theatre 6: "A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"I'll Do Anything" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Blink" (Michael Apted).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Where the Rivers Flow North" (Jay Craven) and "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Germinal" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough), with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger.

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Reality Bites" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Fiorile" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Ref" (Ted Demme), with Denis Leary, Judy Davis, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 3: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 4: "Angie" (†).
Theatre 5: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Remains of the Day" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
Through March 17: "Short Cuts" (†).
From March 18: "Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright) and "China Moon" (†).
Theatre 2: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: To be announced.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through March 17: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†). From March 18: "Monkey Trouble" (directed by Franco Amurri).
Theatre 2: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).
Theatre 3: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 5: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 7: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer), with Paul Hogan and Cuba Goodings, Jr.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Ref" (Ted Demme), with Denis Leary, Judy Davis, and Kevin Spacey.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "China Moon" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
To be announced.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.
Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through March 17: "Bureau of Missing Persons" (1933, directed by Roy Del Ruth), "I've Got Your Number" (1923, Ray Enright), and "Blondie Johnson" (1933, Enright).
March 18-19: "Cabin in the Cotton" (†) and "Ex-Lady" (1933, Robert Florey).
March 20: "Blonde Crazy" (1931, Roy Del Ruth), "Smart Money" (1931, Alfred E. Green), and "Sinner's Holiday" (1930, John Adolphi).
March 21: A program of Looney Tunes cartoons made before the production code; and a reading of the script of "Convention City," a film made in 1933.
March 22: "Five Star Final" (1931, Mervyn Le Roy) and "The Finger Points" (1933, John Francis Dillon).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
March 16: "Alphaville" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French) and "Le Gai Savoir" (1968, Godard; in French).
March 17: "And Then There Were None" (†) and "The Old Dark House" (1932, James Whale).
March 18-19: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan) and "The Long, Hot Summer" (1958, Martin Ritt).
March 20: "Horse Feathers" (1932, Norman McLeod) and "The Cocoanuts" (1929, Joseph Santley and Robert Florey).
March 21: "Masculine Feminine" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French) and "A Married Woman" (1965, Godard; in French).
March 22: "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell) and "Sons and Lovers" (1960, Jack Cardiff).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films starring Jeanne Moreau. March 17 at 2:30: "French Provincial" (1975, directed by André Téchiné; in French). . . . March 17 at 6: "L'Adolescente" (1976, Moreau; in French). . . . March 17 at 8: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French). . . . March 18 at 2:30: "Querelle" (1982, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German). . . . ¶ A program of films produced by Gaumont, the French movie studio. March 17 at 6 and March 22 at 2:30: "L'As des As" (1982, Gérard Oury). . . . March 21 at 2:30: "Hail Mary" (†).

New Directors/New Films—The first programs in a seventeen-day festival of international films. March 18 at 6 and March 19 at 3: "Norman People Are Nothing Special" (Laurence Ferreira Barbosa, France). . . . ¶ March 18 at 9 and March 19 at 12:30: "The Girl in the Watermelon" (Sergio M. Castilla, United States). . . . ¶ March 19 at 6 and March 20 at 3:15: "Betrayal" (Radu Mihaileanu, France and Romania). . . . ¶ March 19 at 9 and March 20 at 12:30: "Bhaji on the Beach" (Gurinder Chadha, Great Britain). . . . ¶ March 20 at 6 and March 22 at 9: "Looking for Fun" (Ning Ying, China and Hong Kong). . . . ¶ March 20 at 9 and March 21 at 6: "Drumroll" (Sergei Ovcharov, Russia and France). . . . ¶ March 22 at 6: "Clean, Shaven" (Lodge Kerrigan, United States). (Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 875-5610.)

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Robert Aldrich. March 16 at 2 and 6: "Vera Cruz" (1954). . . . ¶ March 16 at 4: "Apache" (1954). . . . ¶ March 17 at 2, 4:15, 6:30, and 8:45: "Kiss Me Deadly" (†). . . . ¶ March 18 at 2 and 6:30 and March 19 at 5:45: "The Big Knife" (1955). . . . ¶ March 18 at 4:15 and 8:45 and March 20 at 3:30 and 7:40: "Autumn Leaves" (†). . . . ¶ March 19 at 3:30 and 8 and March 22 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Attack!" (1956). . . . ¶ March 20 at 5:40 and March 22 at 2: "Ten Seconds to Hell" (1959).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—March 19 at 1:30: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†). . . . ¶ March 19 at 4: A program of independent and experimental films. . . . ¶ Films by Oscar Micheaux. March 20 at 2: "Underworld" (1936). . . . March 20 at 4:30: "The Notorious Elinor Lee" (1940).

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program called "Hollywood and the French New Wave." March 20 at 12:30: "Strangers on a Train" (1951, Alfred Hitchcock) and "Les Bonnes Femmes" (1960, Claude Chabrol; in French).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 16 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Barjo" (1992, Jérôme Boivin; in French).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—"Pacific Reflections: How Japan and America See Each Other in Film." March 18 at 6:30: "Mystery Train" (1989, Jim Jarmusch). . . . ¶ March 22 at 6:30: "The Yakuza" (1975, Sydney Pollack).

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films made by American independent filmmakers. March 22 at 7: Kenneth Anger will introduce a program of his 16-mm. films made between 1947 and 1980.

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- First draft of novel (700 pages)
- Second draft of novel (500 pages)
- Final draft of novel (300 pages)
- Exercise routine from High Voltage
- Notes on Salvation Army stores all over the country
- Research on camels
- Articles about hairless dogs
- Letter to Jeffrey T. Leeds, my financial advisor

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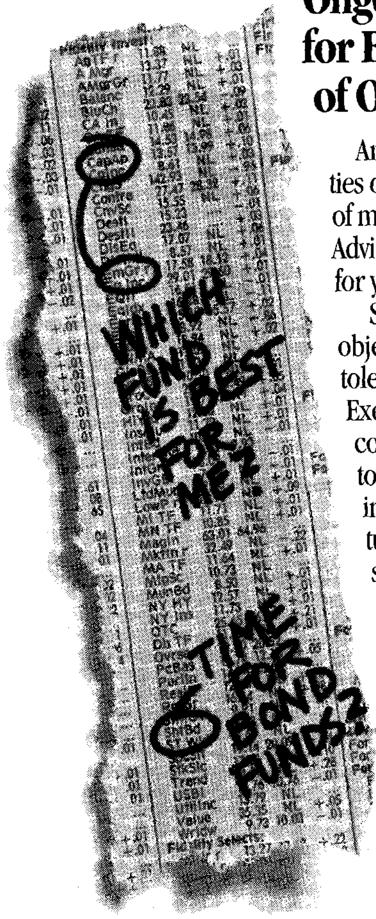
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MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

BITTER MOON—Roman Polanski's erotic drama about two married couples who meet on a cruise ship. With Peter Coyote, Emmanuelle Seigner, Hugh Grant, and Kristin Scott-Thomas. Based on the novel "Lunes de Fiel," by Pascal Bruckner. Opening March 18.

MONKEY TROUBLE—A young girl (Thora Birch) adopts a runaway pet monkey, but the thief (Harvey Keitel) who trained the animal to pick pockets wants it back. With Mimi Rogers and Christopher McDonald. Directed by Franco Amurri. Opening March 18.

NAKED GUN 33 1/3: THE FINAL INSULT—Another installment in the endless gagfest. With Leslie Nielsen, Priscilla Presley, George Kennedy, and O. J. Simpson. Directed by Peter Segal. Opening March 18.

OH, WOE IS ME—Jean-Luc Godard's modern retelling of a Greek myth about a lustful god who impersonates a mortal woman's husband. Gérard Depardieu plays the husband and the god. With Laurence Masliah, Bernard Verley, and Jean-Louis Loca. In French. Opening March 18.

THE PAPER—Ron Howard's film about life, love, and ethics on a big-city newspaper. With Michael Keaton, Glenn Close, Robert Duvall, Marisa Tomei, and Randy Quaid. Written by David and Stephen Koepp. Opening March 18.

SUTURE—A psychological thriller about estranged brothers, mistaken identity, and murder. One brother is black, the other white, and no one seems to notice. With Dennis Haysbert, Michael Harris, Dina Merrill, and Mel Harris. Directed by Scott McGehee and David Siegal. Opening March 18.

THE WONDERFUL, HORRIBLE LIFE OF LENI RIEFENSTAHL—Ray Müller's documentary biography of the German filmmaker. In German. Opening March 16.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

ACE VENTURA: PET DETECTIVE—A go-for-broke buffoon, double-jointed from the eyeballs down, Jim Carrey can be funny for three minutes at a time on "In Living Color." In this smutty kiddie farce he's a clownish action toy, and he grows wearying, fast. Playing the "pet detective" hired to find the Miami Dolphins' mascot, he doesn't get much chemistry going with the supporting animals, let alone the supporting cast (Sean Young, Courteney Cox, Tone Loc, and Dolphins quarterback Dan Marino). His comic language is made up of accent marks, not characters; instead of inhabiting a scene, he swallows it up and spits it out in manic doodles. Tom Shadyac directed and co-wrote the script with Carrey and Jack Bernstein.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through March 17.)

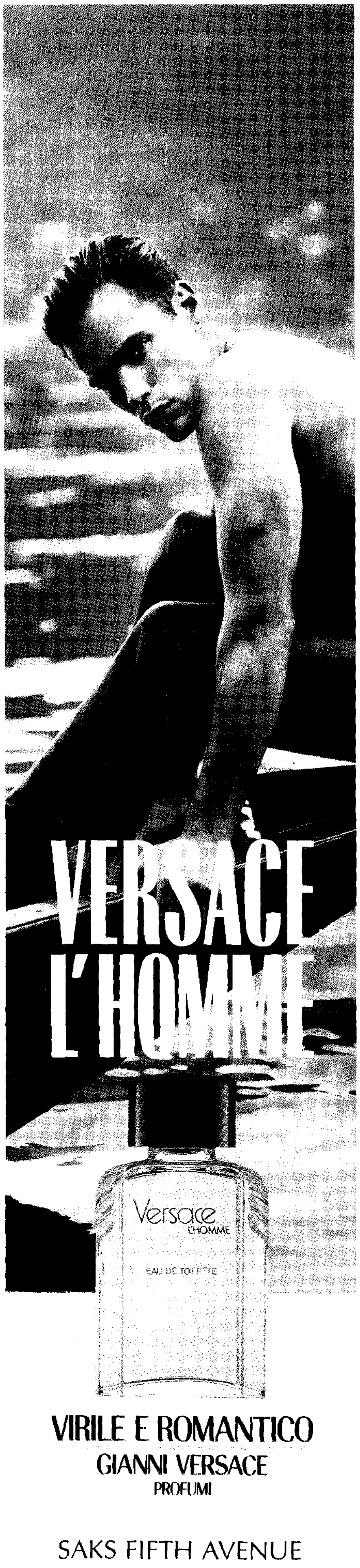
ANGIE—A wet, sticky portrait of a pregnant Bensonhurst woman (Geena Davis) who refuses to marry her longtime neighborhood boyfriend, the father (James Gandolfini). The characterizations and relationships are both "earthy" and flimsy: Angie's initial date with a Manhattan-based international lawyer (Stephen Rea) plays like a bad dream sequence. Rea is as soft and jokey as a Muppet, and Davis, in a career first, struggles to be ingratiating. It's hard to gauge what's more bathetic: the stuff about Angie's mother, a "free spirit" who left her at age three, or the stuff about Angie's baby, who's born with a defect. Philip Bosco and Jenny O'Hara (functioning as a Shirley MacLaine clone) play the heroine's father and stepmother, and Aida Turturro is her best friend. Martha Coolidge directed the script by Todd Graff, based on Avra Wing's novel, "Angie, I Says."—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

BLUE—After "The Double Life of Véronique," the Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski has come up with another lovely and perplexing film. Julie (Juliette Binoche) loses her husband and daughter in a car accident and sees that loss as a chance to break free. She moves to Paris, sheds a lover, and takes an apartment, but at every turn the past catches up. Her memories tend to rush back in with a burst of music (the husband was a composer); at times, the movie is more like a sound-and-light show than a drama. It could easily have been too grand and mournful for its own good, but it's lightened, against all expectation, by a glancing comedy. Binoche gives her most responsive performance to date. In French.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CHINA MOON—Corkscrew thrillers need more than one twist. Somebody should have told the director (John Bailey) and writer (Roy Carlson) of this shopworn "Double Indemnity" knockoff. They take their time getting to the sole switcheroo. Ed Harris emotes plausibly as a lovestruck Florida cop and Madeleine Stowe shimmers in the moonlight as the object of his desire, but the movie is too basic—strictly "Single Indemnity." Benicio Del Toro filches a few scenes as Harris's partner, and Willy Kurant's cinematography has striking nocturnal highlights.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Metro Cinema, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Cinema 3rd Avenue, and East 85th Street; through March 17.)

FIORILE—The new movie by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani is a family saga that, according to the filmmakers, is based on legends they heard while they were growing up in Tuscany. The picture, spanning two hundred years, tells the story of the Benedettis (who are sometimes referred to by the locals as the Maledettis). The Benedettis begin as peasants and become wealthy landowners, but their prosperity and power derive from an original sin, committed in the seventeen-nineties, for which future generations have never received full absolution. The screenplay, by the Tavianis and Sandro Petraglia, is constructed as a series of historical tales framed by a contemporary story in which members of the three surviving generations of the Benedettis illustrate, in various ways, the consequences of their blighted family history. Although the movie is elegantly made and has moments of great beauty, it somehow falls short of delivering the tremendous emotional impact that it promises. The three legends we're told about the family aren't extraordinary in themselves, and the thematic structure—the whole saga comes down to a parable about love versus greed—is disappointingly banal. With Michael Vartan, Galatea Ranzi, Claudio Bigagli, and Renato Carpentieri. In Italian.—T.R. (2/7/94) (Village East Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

GERMINAL—Claude Berri's latest epic, adapted from Zola, is set in nineteenth-century France, a lot of it underground. There, such miners as Maheu (Gérard Depardieu), the creepy Chaval (Jean-Roger Milo), and the troubled newcomer, Étienne (Renaud), ply their spine-cracking trade and work up steam against the venal demands of the company. Things are no easier at ground level; Maheu and his wife (a downcast Miou-Miou) already have countless children to feed, and we get to see them making a new one, up against the kitchen sink. Depardieu is all lusty brawn and strident yearnings, but Maheu is too dull and decent a role for the actor's loutish sense of fun. The movie itself is a largely fun-free zone. No one could argue with its cry for justice, but individual stories tend to get drowned out, and the act of watching it comes embarrassingly close to life in the pits—a long, hard slog in the dark. Berri has opted for the unhurried narrative sprawl that served him so well in "Jean de Florette," but this time the private battles at its core seem far less gripping. Just occasionally, everything clicks: when a stolid, silent old miner strangles



IN BRIEF-Cont'd

the life out of a rich young girl, you feel the rage of a whole society sharpened to a terrible point. In French.—A.L. (3/14/94) (Paris.)

I'll Do Anything—Written and directed by James L. Brooks, this movie started life as a musical comedy and wound up as an extreme oddity. (The music was dropped along the way.) Nick Nolte stars as Matt Hobbs, a not-in-demand actor who hangs around Los Angeles looking for work and tends to the unflagging demands of his young daughter (Whittni Wright), whose own road to stardom is less bumpy. This domestic saga takes up most of the plot, leaving other love stories—a wounded romance between Burke (Albert Brooks) and Nan (Julie Kavner), and Matt's courting of a movie executive named Cathy (Joely Richardson)—patchy and undeveloped. There are sunny moments here, but the director won't let the mood grow; he prefers to score angry points against the movie industry.—A.L. (2/28/94) (Ziegfeld.)

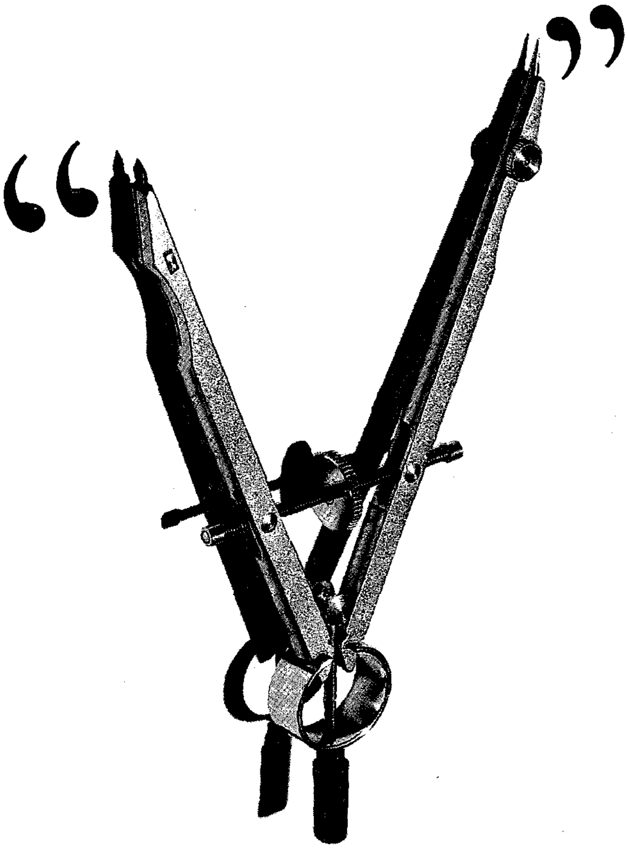
In the Name of the Father—Jim Sheridan's ragged, fascinating new movie is based on the autobiography of Gerry Conlon, a Belfast Catholic who spent nearly fifteen years in British prisons for a crime he didn't commit. Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis) and three friends were accused of participating in the 1974 bombing of a pub near London, in which five people were killed; the only evidence against Conlon was his own confession, extracted from him by means of a brutal police interrogation. When Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, try to function as historians, the movie feels shaky. But when Gerry and his father (Pete Postlethwaite)—who has been convicted on a different charge—get to prison, the filmmakers begin to explore their real theme, which is the intimate emotional consequences of oppression and prejudice. Day-Lewis, Postlethwaite, and Don Baker (playing a chillingly self-possessed I.R.A. man) are superb. Also with Emma Thompson and Corin Redgrave.—T.R. (1/24/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly and Chelsea Cinemas.)

On Deadly Ground—This high-tech, low-I.Q. Northwestern proves that a glacier *is* more expressive than Steven Seagal. The two-fisted (and two-footed) guardian of vulgar liberalism allies himself with the Eskimos when he goes on the warpath against cold-blooded oil tycoon Michael Caine. Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone proudly killed bears; under the guidance of the Inuit, Seagal communes with the mystic spirit of the Bear, then slaughters any unfortunate human who interferes with his attempt to disable Caine's polluting oil rig. First-time director Seagal gets off on shots of bad guys thrown through glass. The Alaskan locations are gorgeous, but this bludgeoning, ludicrous movie provokes nostalgia for melodramas that had cardboard scenery and real people. With Joan Chen. Cinematography by Ric Waite; screenplay by Ed Horowitz and Robin U. Russin.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there's a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Criterion Center.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beaches and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Reality Bites—Ben Stiller's film is a romantic comedy about what has come to be called Generation X. The characters are just out of college, and they're not thrilled about their prospects: they're overeducated and underemployed, and no one seems to know, or care, what they're going through. The script, by Helen Childress, is packed with knowing pop-culture references, and the soundtrack is filled with the music of college-radio favorites like World Party and Juliana Hatfield. The picture has its charms: Stiller's direction gives it an appropriately loose, drifting rhythm; Winona Ryder, in the central role, has a fresh, natural style that makes even the most contrived dialogue sound authentic. But the story is essentially a thin and conventional romantic triangle, straight out of thirties Hollywood; the filmmakers try to disguise the fluffiness by unleashing a torrent of trash-culture allusions and sociological truisms.



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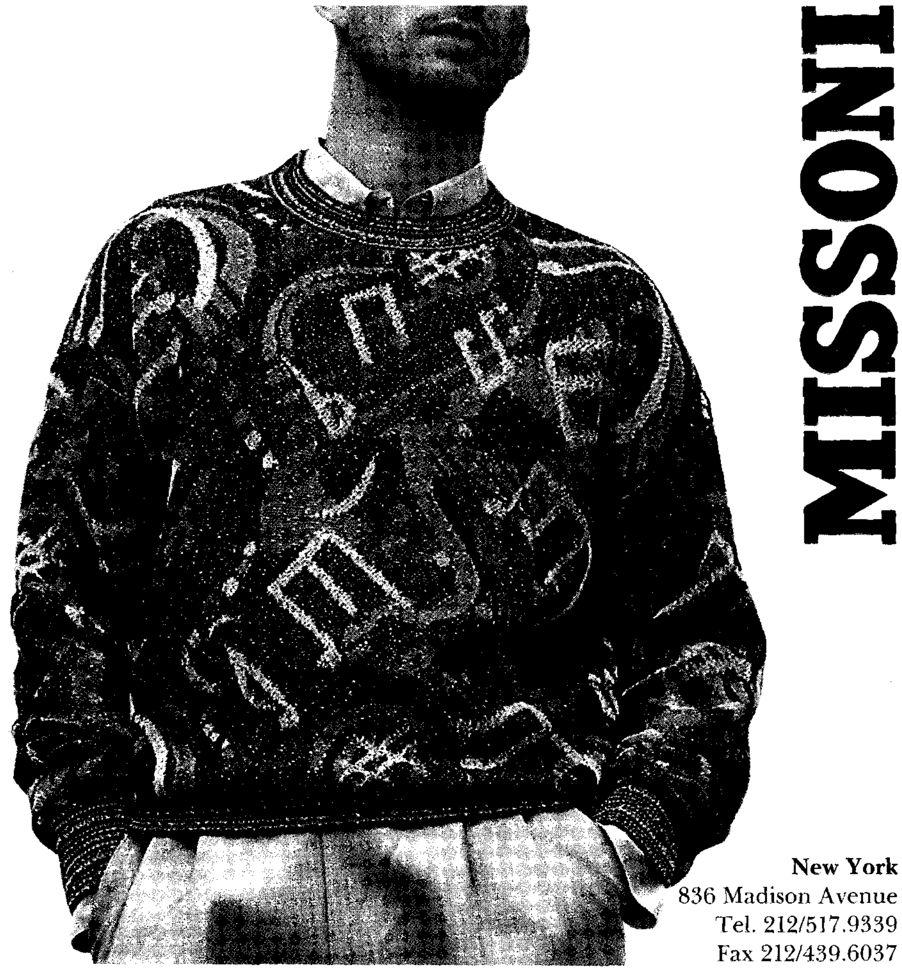
When the movie is over, you don't feel as if you had shared the experience of a new generation; you feel puzzled and vaguely crummy, as if you had just read a solemn news-magazine cover story about it. Also with Stiller, Ethan Hawke, Janeane Garofalo, Steve Zahn, and John Mahoney.—T.R. (3/7/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

The Remains of the Day—Anthony Hopkins plays Stevens, a butler who has given long and faithful service at Darlington Hall and maintained his emotional temperature at absolute zero. This has cost him dearly: first, he failed to see that his master (James Fox) was dangerously bent on appeasement with the Germans in the nineteen-thirties; and, second, he refused to accept, or even acknowledge, the love offered to him by the housekeeper (Emma Thompson). Adapted by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, this Merchant-Ivory production strains so hard to portray dignified restraint that it almost seizes up with good manners. This is especially unfair to Thompson, who is forced to smother her naturally high spirits.—A.L. (11/15/93) (Village Theatre VII, Cinema II, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Romeo Is Bleeding—The writer and co-producer, Hilary Henkin, proves that a female moviemaker can be brutal and derivative, too. At the center of this arty melodrama are a sorry doofus of a crooked New York cop (Gary Oldman), his ditzy mistress (Juliette Lewis), his fed-up wife (Annabella Sciorra), and the vicious femme fatale (Lena Olin) who costs him everything. Henkin and the director, Peter Medak, imagine they can revive film noir by halving an antihero's I.Q. and kinking up his sex life. The audience is supposed to take this witless film as black comedy simply because the evil is bottomless and the characterizations are over the top. With Roy Scheider as Mob boss Don Falcone.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Festival.)

Savage Nights—This is the story of Jean, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, caught between the opposing charms of Laura (Romane Bohringer) and Samy (Carlos López). He is played by Cyril Collard, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, who also directed the movie and wrote the screenplay, based on his own original novel. (Collard died last year.) For those who found "Philadelphia" too kindly and sanitized, the emotional dirt of "Savage Nights" will come as a relief; when Laura learns of Jean's condition, she throws a fit and then takes off his condom, wanting to prove her love with perilous sex. It's that old French refrain, the dark poetry of the death wish, and the best scenes consist simply of the hero gunning his red sports car through the night. But the movie disintegrates badly, and loses force; the characters seem not so much to be living through their experiences as using them to strike a philosophical pose. In French.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center.)

The Scent of Green Papaya—Vietnam's first Academy Award nominee for best foreign film offers an easy-to-resist blend of indoor nature chronicle (it could be subtitled "The Insects and Reptiles of Saigon") and bittersweet remembrance. The writer-director, Tran Anh Hung, has a visual idea or two; in prolonged, gliding tracking shots he traces the progress of a provincial girl named Mui, who works for a deceptively comfortable Saigon family and then for an eligible composer. When the camera skates through homes as neat and geometric as dioramas, it makes viewers feel as if they were on a moving sidewalk at a World's Fair exhibition about South Vietnam before the fall. The result is a kind of 3-D calligraphy rather than dramatic moviemaking. Lu Man San plays Mui at age ten; Tran Nu Yên-Khê plays her at twenty. Cinematography by Benoît Delhomme. In Vietnamese.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)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IN BRIEF-Cont'd

Schindler's List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn't shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e. nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. Along with Neeson, who is brilliant, the standouts in the large cast are Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Short Cuts—Robert Altman uses nine short stories by Raymond Carver as the raw material for a latter-day "Nashville," set in Southern California. (One story line—by far the weakest—is the invention of Altman and his co-screenwriter, Frank Barhydt.) Most of the stories in the three-hour-and-seven-minute movie are about misunderstandings—often outright hostilities—between men and women, and the juxtaposition of all these poisonous domestic relationships has the effect of turning Carver's closely observed, scrupulously specific small dramas into a big, obvious generalization about men's brutality and women's capacity for endurance. Despite Altman's exquisite control of pace, the movie seems thin and insubstantial, and every moment feels pretty much like every other. Of the twenty-two principal actors, a handful do terrific work here: Jack Lemmon, Bruce Davison, Julianne Moore, Lily Tomlin, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Madeleine Stowe.—T.R. (9/27/93) (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Thalia; through March 17.)

Six Degrees of Separation—Fred Schepisi's film of John Guare's brilliant play about affluent, liberal-seeming New Yorkers who are conned by a young, gay black man claiming to be the son of Sidney Poitier. It's as agile and as inventive a visualization of complex theatrical material as you'll ever see. Guare's script (which sticks close to the text of the play) is a virtuoso comedy of upper-middle-class Manhattan manners, and the writing is amazingly nimble and unpredictable. His subject is the possibility, and the necessity, of seeing the world through someone else's eyes. The odd empathy that develops between the privileged heroine, Ouisa (Stockard Channing), and the young hustler (Will Smith) is moving because it emerges, unexpectedly, out of their radically different—but equally ingenious—strategies for manipulating experience. Their cleverness, like Guare's, ultimately transcends itself. Schepisi's direction keeps the movie charging forward, driven by its locomotive wit, until near the end, when we find ourselves set down in a huge and thrillingly unfamiliar emotional landscape, hardly knowing how we got there. It's a wonderful ride. The terrific cast also includes Donald Sutherland, Mary Beth Hurt, Bruce Davison, and Anthony Michael Hall.—T.R. (59th Street East Cinema, Waverly, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

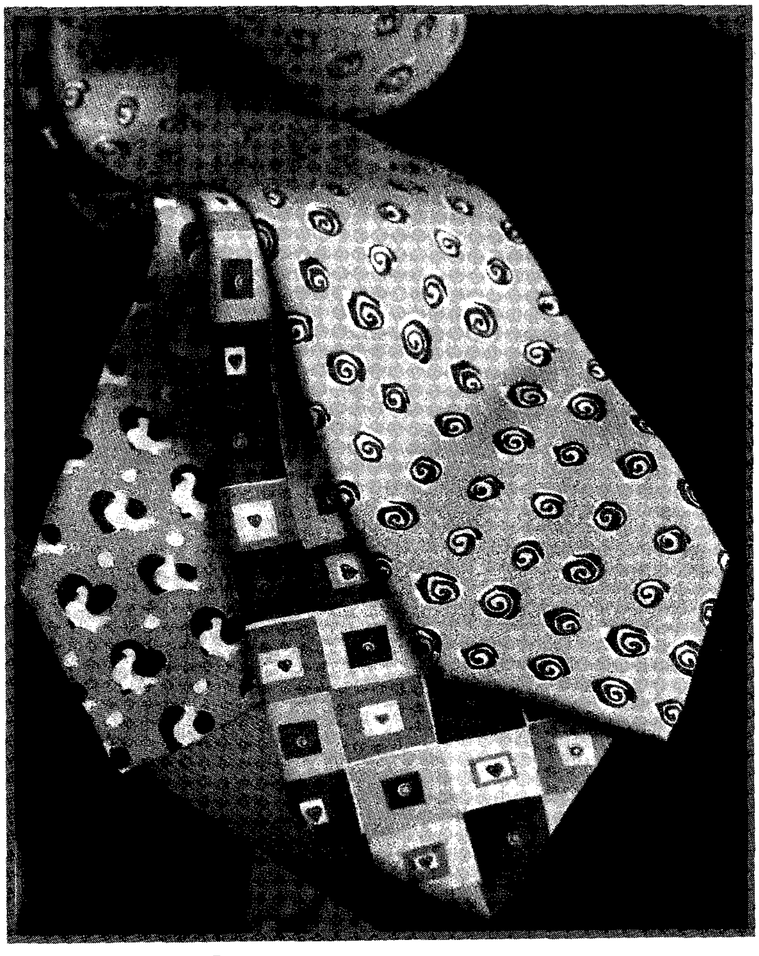
What's Eating Gilbert Grape—The small-town setting is Endora, Iowa; the hero (Johnny Depp) is a grocery clerk who can't endure it. He and his two sisters (Laura Harrington and Mary Kate Schellhardt) are stuck there while they take care of a morbidly obese mother who won't leave the house (Darlene Cates) and a mentally challenged brother named Arnie (Leonardo DiCaprio). The director, Lasse Hallström, aims for a tragicomic fable that says a rut is as deep as you make it; he tries to be sensitive without being boring. But the film is still implicitly condescending since almost all the characters (including the afflicted ones) function as tests of Gilbert's patience. John C. Reilly and Crispin Glover (as Gilbert's buddies) contribute affable comic turns, but the exuberant, inventive DiCaprio is the only one who transcends the flatness of the storytelling. With Juliette Lewis and Mary Steenburgen. Peter Hedges adapted his own novel.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Plaza, Orpheum VII, and Columbus Circle.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

And Then There Were None (1945)—The Agatha Christie murder mystery and play "Ten Little Indians" gathers together a group of characters and then ticks them off to the nursery rhyme. Ten people are invited to spend a weekend on an island by a host none of them knows; on arrival, they are notified by phonograph that their host, in absentia, is going to punish them for various crimes they have committed, and they start keeling over like plague victims. This René Clair version isn't exactly full of life to start with, despite the cast—Judith Anderson, June Duprez, Roland Young, Walter Huston, Mischa Auer, Barry Fitzgerald, Richard Haydn, Louis Hayward, C. Aubrey Smith, Queenie Leonard, and Harry Thurston. The efforts at sprightly, stylish comedy don't gain much momentum. Adapted by Dudley Nichols.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 17.)

Autumn Leaves (1956)—Robert Aldrich piling on the garish melodrama and working up a storm of emotional anguish. He holds your attention even though some part of



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you is giggling while you watch Joan Crawford take as her husband Cliff Robertson, who is not well in the head. He tosses objects at her (including a standard typewriter), and she heaves, gasps, and rolls her large eyes, but persists in being understanding. What's eating him is that in his first marriage (to Vera Miles) he was cuckolded by his own rotten dad (Lorne Greene). It eventually becomes evident to the hand-wringing, knuckle-gnawing Crawford that *something* has to be done, but not until after she does a lot of striding up and down.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 18 and 20.)

Cabin in the Cotton (1932)—Bette Davis in her first wickedly sexy role, trying to tempt Richard Barthelmess away from virtue (Dorothy Jordan). The melodrama about the cheating Southern planters is naïvely socially conscious, but Davis has a lot of fresh impact. Michael Curtiz directed.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 18-19.)

Hail Mary (1985)—That *adulte terrible* Jean-Luc Godard tries to eat his Communion wafer and have it, too—to make both a serious modern statement about the Annunciation and Nativity, and a sort of straight-faced burlesque. Godard doesn't present Mary and Joseph as symbolic figures in a sleazy new type of crèche. Somehow they've just popped up in the late twentieth century, in working-class Switzerland. In half-goofy, half-reverent fashion, Godard scrapes away the layers of piety that prevent viewers from experiencing Biblical events imaginatively, in all their far-out glory. Audiences may tune out during dull patches; the movie is best seen after reading the hilarious exposition of it in the 1986 collection "Crackpot: The Obsessions of John Waters."—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; March 21.)

Kiss Me Deadly (1955)—Robert Aldrich and his screenwriter, A. I. Bezzerides, take Mickey Spillane's 1952 private-eye novel and turn it into a swipe at consumer-era machismo. Mike Hammer (Ralph Meeker) picks up a desperate female hitchhiker (Cloris Leachman, in her first movie role), who pegs him as a guy concerned only with his clothes, his sports car, and his physique. After some mysterious torturers murder Leachman and nearly kill Hammer, he decides to investigate the homicide himself—not because he got attached to Leachman but because he figures that any case getting federal attention is bound to involve big money. Brando stripped of poetry and sensitivity and glazed with playboy glamour—that's what Meeker looks, sounds, and acts like as Hammer. He's a clumsy, rabid spellbinder. So's the movie.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 17.)

Who Framed Roger Rabbit (1988)—Robert Zemekis's manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams.—T.R. (American Museum of the Moving Image; March 19.)

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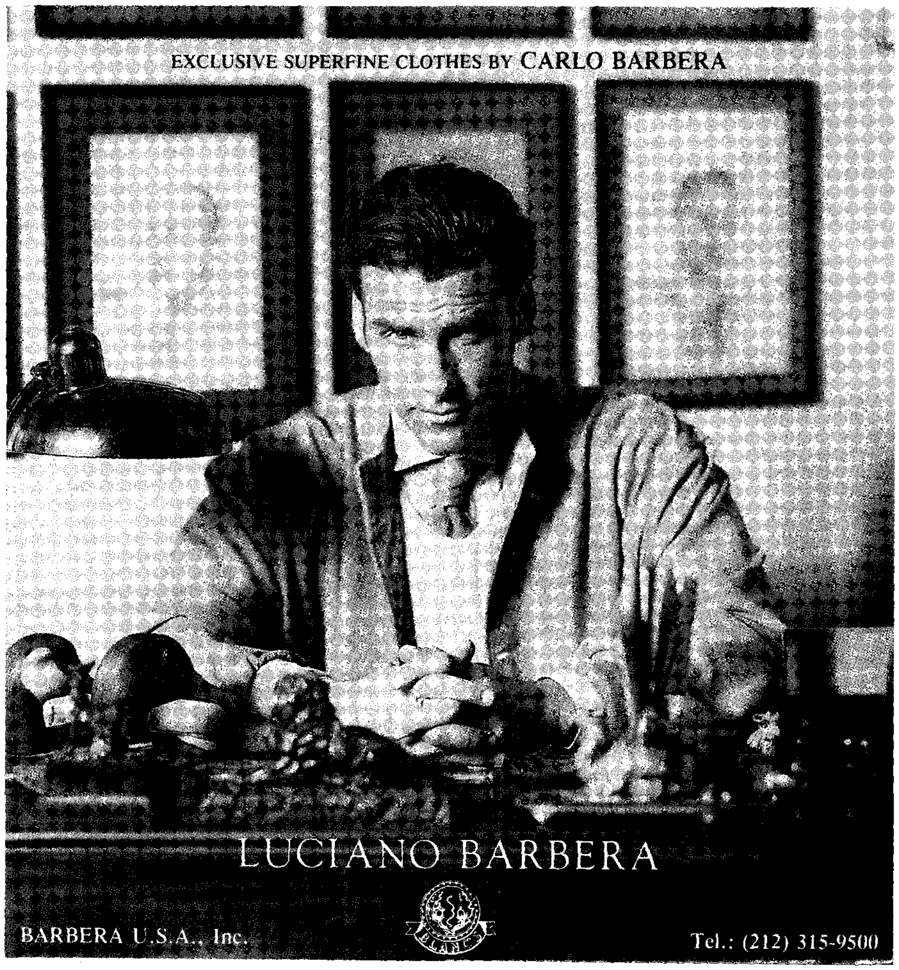

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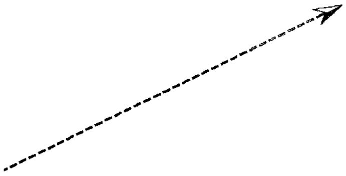

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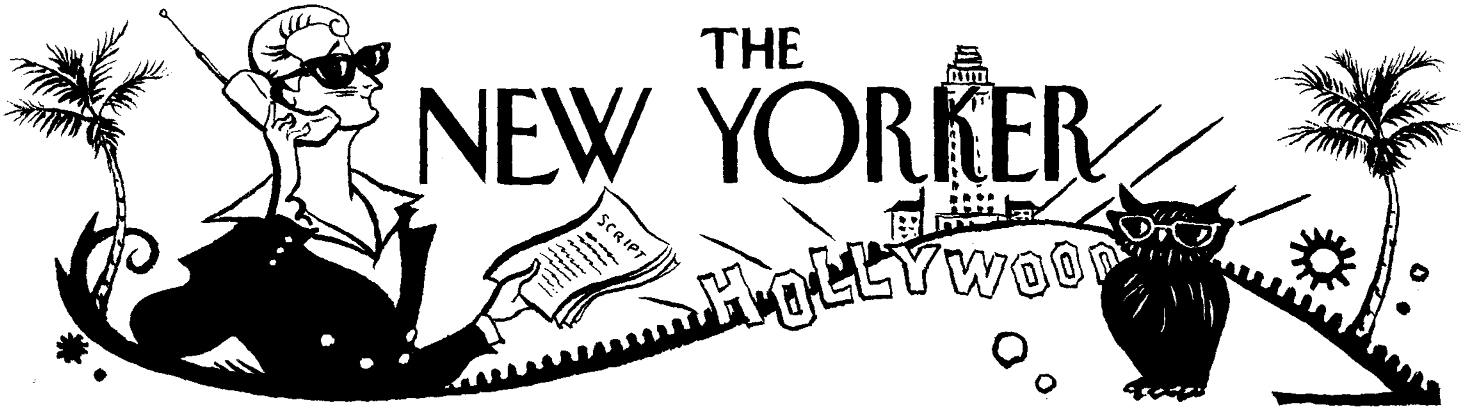


THE TALK OF THE TOWN

DAVID KOEPP IS A VERY NICE SCREENWRITER. REALLY

In the past five years, seven of David Koepp's screenplays have been made into movies. That feat is all but unheard-of in Hollywood, where the writer's customary path to riches—or rent money, anyway—is to write screenplay after screenplay that never gets produced, or to rewrite other people's screenplays and end up without a credit. Koepp's recent credits include "Jurassic Park," which he wrote in collaboration with Michael Crichton, and "Carlito's Way," which was directed by Brian De Palma. His most recent credits include "The Paper," which will have its première this month, and "The Shadow," which stars Alec Baldwin and will open this summer. Koepp is so highly regarded in Hollywood right now that he makes, according to industry sources, as much as a million dollars a script, and perhaps more.

Partly because we are fascinated by the thought of all those zeros, we went to see Koepp not long ago. When we arrived at his office, which is situated on the third floor of a ziggurat-shaped building at Universal Studios, Koepp wasn't there. Sitting on his couch was a nice-looking green-eyed kid who was wearing a lumberjack shirt, faded bluejeans, and basketball shoes. On the floor near his feet was a pasteboard carton containing "Jurassic Park" toys. Shockingly, this kid turned out to be Koepp after all. He is thirty years old but looks about the age of a freshman roommate, say, and he has a Green Bay Packers wastebasket. We sat down across a coffee table from him and asked him, in effect, "Why you?"

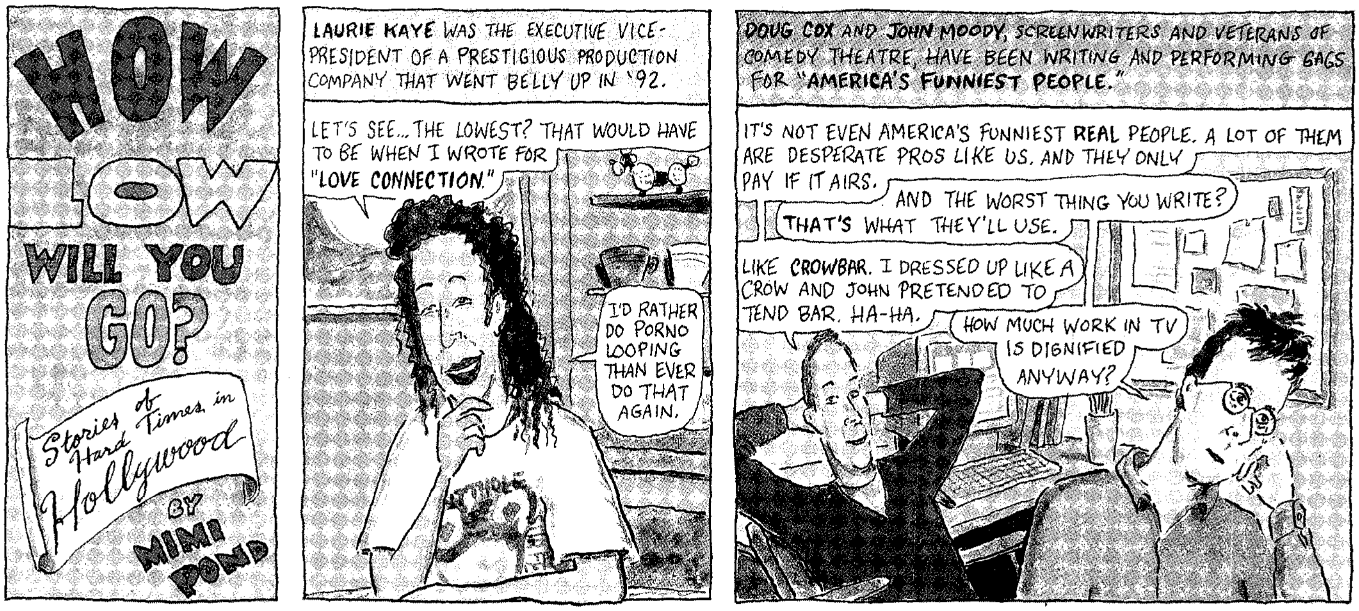
Koepp said, "I grew up in Wisconsin, in this town called Pewaukee—P-e-w-a-u-k-e-e—and, if you mention that, my father will be really, really happy, because *his* father was the mayor. I wanted to be an actor, and I went to college in Madison for a couple of years, to do acting, but after a while I realized that I wasn't any good. I was also writing plays and things, and then I decided I wanted to write movies, so I transferred to the film school at U.C.L.A. My first movie was 'Apartment Zero,' which I co-wrote with Martin Donovan, who directed it. We also produced it together. I was twenty-four, I think, and we went down to Argentina to shoot it, and we made it for something like a million dollars. It came out in 1989."

That's about as hair-raising as his life story gets. His second film was "Bad Influence," which came out in 1990. His third, in 1992, was "Death Becomes Her," which starred Meryl Streep, Goldie Hawn, and Bruce Willis. Then, in a torrent, came "Jurassic Park," "Carlito's Way," "The Paper," and "The Shadow." He wrote "The Paper" in collaboration with his big brother, Stephen, who is a senior editor at *Time.*

Out of all the green-eyed, Wisconsin-born little brothers in the world, how did Koepp manage to become, in such an astonishingly short time, the person Steven Spielberg would turn to when he needed help on "Jurassic Park"?

Koepp said, "I think I work very hard—I know I work very hard—so I'm sure that had a lot to do with it. But there were also a number of fortuitous meetings and stuff like that—people I happened to run into, or people I happened to hit it off with. It's hard to put your finger on. When you're younger, you think that you do a draft or two and then anything after that would be compromising your vision. Well, that's just not the case. Nobody writes first drafts from God, except Mozart. It just takes so, so long. The mark of a good screenwriter, I came to learn, is how often you are willing to return to it. I think the reason I've had so many movies in the last year or two is just that I worked un-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY PANTER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LIKE CROWBAR. I DRESSED UP LIKE A CROW AND JOHN PRETENDED TO TEND BAR. HA-HA.
HOW MUCH WORK IN TV IS DIGNIFIED ANYWAY?

godly hard, and I wouldn't want to get in that position again. I was just underwater for about two years, and it was really unpleasant."

And yet it could be argued—from a multi-zero-based point of view—that the experience was nowhere near unpleasant enough, could it not?

"I'm kind of bad copy," Koepp said, "because on all the movies I've done I've had really great experiences and worked with really decent people. Spielberg was really supportive, and really great to work with. He was very open. I said, 'What are my limitations?' and he said, 'Your imagination.' So I really had the freedom to try anything I wanted, to change anything I wanted. It was a really pleasant experience. And nobody hated anybody else, and there were no wars, and it really went smoothly, and it came in under budget, and it turned out to be the biggest film of all time."

KEANU REEVES (IN THEORY)

YOU might be under the impression that "The Films of Keanu Reeves"—Course F/373, Spring Term, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena—is a gut, but it's not. "The Films of McLean Stevenson"—now *that* would be a gut. "The Films of Keanu Reeves" is actually twelve gnarly weeks of culture, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy, plus there's, like, a lot of homework. For instance, one week you not only have to watch "My Own Private Idaho" but have to read "The Idea of Decadence" from "Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism," by Matei Calinescu, and then you probably have to talk in class. Keanu would totally get this, because Keanu has range. "Incredible range," Stephen Prina, the course instructor, was saying recently. "Keanu is very, very broad. This really isn't about being a good actor. It's not about applauding quality. I haven't even *seen* all of Keanu's films. That's my way of eroding my authority in the class, so I can be closer to the students. I didn't want the class to just be a sort of Steve's Favorite Films kind of thing."

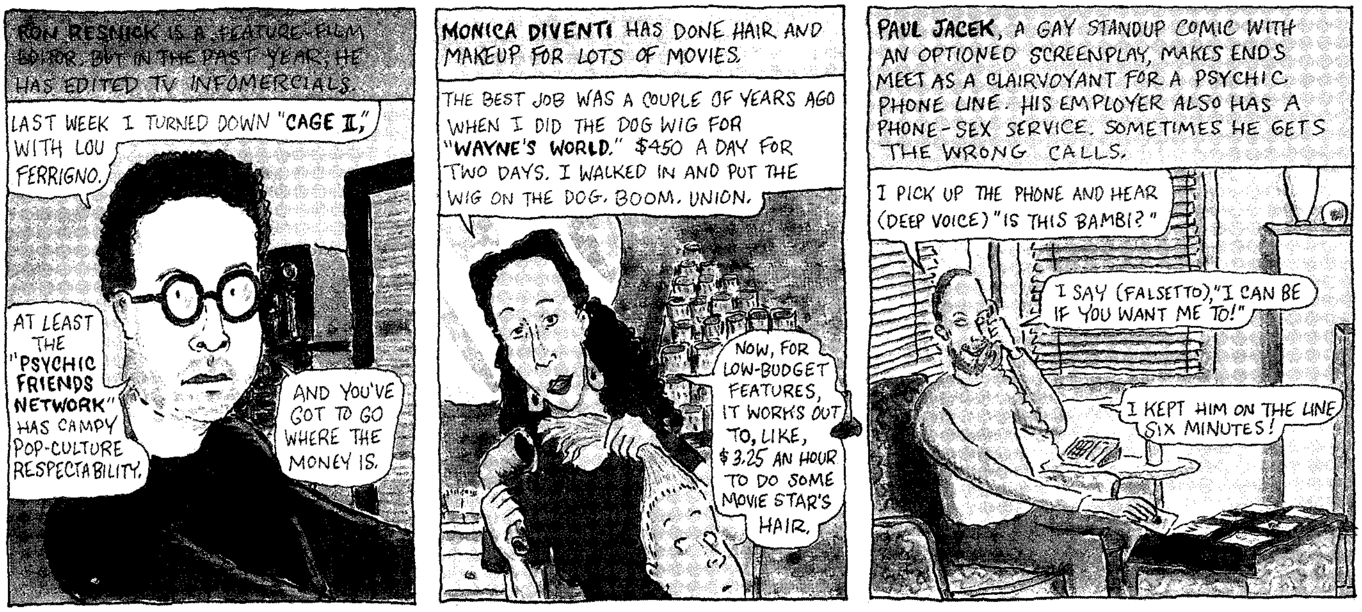
Totally *excellent*.

Mr. Prina, who taught courses on major dudes like Fassbinder and Pasolini in previous years, said that he had been encouraged to design a course on the films of River Phoenix but had been more drawn to Keanu. "I certainly appreciate River's work, but Keanu's career has had a wider scope," he said. "What attracted me to Keanu was the way he occupies the heartthrob position but also dabbles in Shakespeare. And, of course, there's his work in both 'Bill and Ted' films." Mr. Prina is, of course, referring to "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure" and "Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey," which are both really *righteous*.

"Those should be great classes," Mr. Prina said. "We're reading 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,' by Foucault, when we screen 'Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure,' and a piece by Cynthia Fuchs on exploring masculinities in cinema with 'Bogus Journey.' We've got some other great readings, too, such as Barthes, Richard Sennett, and Andy Warhol. We've also invited Keanu to come speak to the class, which I think would be fantastic, but we haven't heard anything from him yet."

CHRISTINE VACHON BENEFITS THE FRINGE

"I HAVE a very good sense of the national Zeitgeist, or what the market will hold for the kinds of films I make," Christine Vachon observed when we asked her if she could explain how she has done so well. Vachon is a thirty-two-year-old independent producer who has a knack for getting difficult-to-market pictures onto the screen—"which is feat enough," as she noted—and, even better, into the black. A key player in what has come to be known as the New Queer Cinema, she sealed her reputation when she made back-to-back successes of two recalcitrant first features by gay directors. "Poison," by Todd Haynes (a close friend from her student years at Brown), took the odd tack of weaving together three separate stories, including a science-fiction allegory about AIDS and some rough sex out of Genet. "Swoon," by Tom Kalin, examined the homoerotic component of the Leopold and Loeb case; not many people remembered, until Kalin disinterred the scandal, that the killers had also been lovers. Both films were elusive,


RON RESNICK IS A FEATURE-FILM EDITOR. BUT IN THE PAST YEAR, HE HAS EDITED TV INFOMERCIALS.
LAST WEEK I TURNED DOWN "CAGE II," WITH LOU FERRIGNO.
AT LEAST THE "PSYCHIC FRIENDS NETWORK" HAS CAMPY POP-CULTURE RESPECTABILITY.
AND YOU'VE GOT TO GO WHERE THE MONEY IS.
MONICA DIVENTI HAS DONE HAIR AND MAKEUP FOR LOTS OF MOVIES.
THE BEST JOB WAS A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO WHEN I DID THE DOG WIG FOR "WAYNE'S WORLD." $450 A DAY FOR TWO DAYS. I WALKED IN AND PUT THE WIG ON THE DOG. BOOM. UNION.
NOW, FOR LOW-BUDGET FEATURES, IT WORKS OUT TO, LIKE, $3.25 AN HOUR TO DO SOME MOVIE STAR'S HAIR.
PAUL JACEK, A GAY STANDUP COMIC WITH AN OPTIONED SCREENPLAY, MAKES ENDS MEET AS A CLAIRVOYANT FOR A PSYCHIC PHONE LINE. HIS EMPLOYER ALSO HAS A PHONE-SEX SERVICE. SOMETIMES HE GETS THE WRONG CALLS.
I PICK UP THE PHONE AND HEAR (DEEP VOICE) "IS THIS BAMBI?"
I SAY (FALSETTO), "I CAN BE IF YOU WANT ME TO!"
I KEPT HIM ON THE LINE SIX MINUTES!

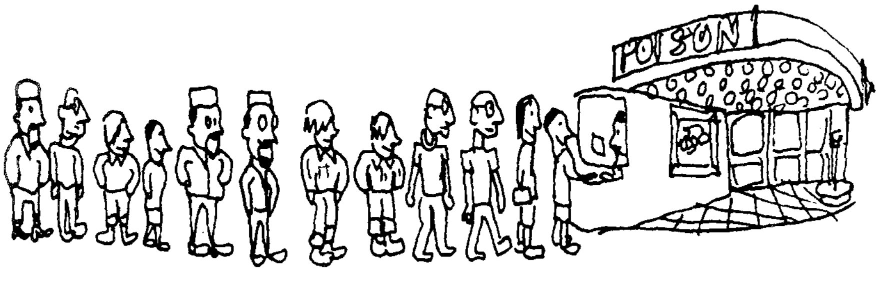
spare (their budgets dictated their aesthetic), and aggressively homosexual, and they seemed grotesquely uncommercial. But they made their money back and then some.

When we spoke to Vachon in January, she and Haynes were out in Los Angeles, filming "Safe," a story about environmental illness—about "people who are allergic to everything, whose immune systems have broken down to the point where they can't live in the world." The movie was in its second week of production, and Vachon had her hands full doing what producers do: securing locations, hiring crew members, managing crises. ("On these kinds of budgets, the crises tend to be frequent," she remarked. That was the day before the earthquake.) "Safe" has a name star—Julianne Moore, who made a splash in "Short Cuts"—and a million-dollar budget, which is four times what "Poison" had. But the money was causing Vachon nothing but headaches. "If you only have two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, you can say, 'Look, I can't pay you for your location, I can't pay you for your work. You either have to donate it to me or not give it to me.' It's very cut-and-dried," she explained. "At a million bucks, you still don't have enough money to do anything." But, she went on, everybody thinks that you do. The crew wants better equipment, and everyone else expects higher fees. "So, in a way, it's worse," she said.

Once "Safe" wrapped, she was planning to turn her attention to selling "Go Fish," a girl-meets-girl comedy that a couple of Chicagoans had brought to her half completed and in need of finishing funds. "I took one look at it and I knew it was a film I wanted to be part of," she told us. "I *knew* that this was going to make some money, that the market was crying out for something like this." Lesbians are even more starved for movies than gay men are—a circumstance that became part of John Pierson's strategy for selling the picture later that month, when it had its first public showing, at the Sundance Film Festival, in Park City, Utah. "Go Fish" marked the first time Vachon has worked with Pierson, who is president of the Islet division of the Island World production company. Since Pierson was the man who sold Spike Lee's first feature, "She's Gotta Have It," back in 1986, he was in a good position to tempt distributors with the crossover lure—the possibility of snaring viewers far beyond the movie's target audience. But "Go Fish" was done on such a shoestring that even if straight audiences were to panic and run from the theatres it shouldn't have any trouble making its money back—a point on which officials of the Samuel Goldwyn Company could reflect confidently when they snapped up world distribution rights only hours after the second Park City screening. (Their confidence must have soared when *Variety* ran a rave the following week.)

Right now, Vachon has another potential money-maker in postproduction: "Postcards from America," which covers three defining eras in the life of the AIDS activist and art-world loudmouth David Wojnarowicz, and which originally got off the ground with a gift from the English pop star Jimmy Somerville. As to other projects that Vachon has had a hand in producing: "Dottie Gets Spanked"—Haynes's troubling short about a first-grade misfit fixated on a TV star, which stirred the audience last October at the New York Film Festival—is slated to air on PBS soon; this summer, work begins on "I Shot Andy Warhol," a film inspired by Warhol's would-be assassin, Valerie Solanis, to be directed by Mary Haron. And plans are in the works, Vachon said, for "Glam," a Haynes picture about glam rock, and for "Savage Grace," an art-pulp project for Kalin.

Vachon traces her sensibility back to the avant-garde films of the sixties, in which, as she put it, "somebody went out with a camera, and that was it. You didn't *have* a production designer, you didn't *have* a cinematographer, or an art director, or anything like that." But



early on she knew that she wanted to go beyond the rawness of such films. "Independent filmmakers are much more savvy than they used to be about Hollywood techniques, and have a much firmer grasp of traditional film language—so that they can turn it on its ear," she remarked. The influence goes in the other direction, too. Hollywood, she observed, has always drawn from the edges. Upon being asked if she had any interest in working on a studio movie herself, if only as a lark, she countered that she didn't know how much of a lark it would really be. But then she confessed to feeling, at times, like a victim of her own image. "I saw this thing in *The Hollywood Reporter* a few months ago," she said. "They did an article on New York independent producers, saying that some independent producers, like me, have made the decision not to work with Hollywood. Well, it's not like anyone ever asked. I didn't get the call and say, '*No*, are you *crazy*?' "

SLOUCHING TOWARDS NAZARETH'S

A MAN loves his cigar, and in this, as in so much in life, a man is basically alone. His wife hates his cigar. His friends hate his cigar. People walk on the sidewalk all the way across the street because they hate his cigar. Sometimes it seems that the only person in the whole world who doesn't hate his cigar is Nazareth Guluzian, of Beverly Hills.

"Cigars are the thing of the century now, in the nineties," Nazareth said, when we dropped by Nazareth's Fine Cigars one recent afternoon. Nazareth has black hair, dark eyes, and a black mustache, and he was wearing a gold bracelet and a dark-gray suit. He was born in Beirut in 1953, he told us, and he came to Beverly Hills in 1978, to manage the humidor at the Dunhill cigar store on Rodeo Drive. He started his own place in 1985 on North Canon Drive. Sensing a coming cigar backlash, he made his place not only a cigar store but also a smoking lounge—a refuge where his increasingly put-upon customers could smoke. A few years later, he bought a second place, a few paces from the first, and moved his retail business into it. His original store is now a smoking lounge that has leather couches, leather chairs, a maroonish carpet, and an expensive air-treatment system that sucks up smoke. It also has a hundred and fifty cedar lockers, each with a brass nameplate, in which members store their cigars. Among the members are Sylvester Stallone, Mike Medavoy, Don Johnson, Pierce Brosnan, David Cassidy, Jim Belushi, and a retired guy who used to work for Doris Day. Of these, only the retired guy who used to work for Doris Day was present that recent afternoon. He was smoking a Romeo y Julieta.

The Doris Day guy said, "Do you realize that, with the smoking ban everywhere in the country, Churchill, Patton, and Kennedy would not be allowed into a place? That's the truth."

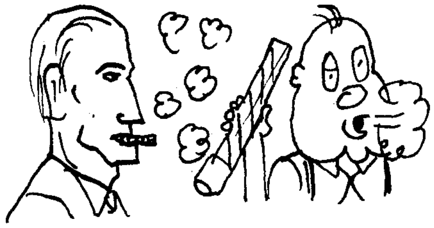
Nazareth said, "Imagine. All these big guys who because they smoke wouldn't be allowed."

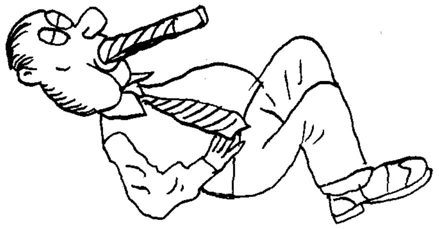
The Doris Day guy said, "Ulysses S. Grant. When you really think about it, the movers and shakers were all cigar smokers."

Nazareth said, "That's very much true."

The Doris Day guy said, "All the great generals. And if you didn't have cigars there wouldn't be a great comic left in the world. Berle. Burns. Benny. Allen. Alan King. All cigar smokers. It's like part and parcel of the aura. Letterman. Cosby. Schwarzenegger."

Arnold Schwarzenegger has a locker at Nazareth's. He also owns a restaurant, in Santa Monica, called Schatzi on Main, where once a month he holds a cigar night. A hundred or a hundred and fifty men and maybe ten women (including, occasionally, Grace Jones) show up to drink fine wine, eat hearty food, and smoke all they want, even while they're eating.

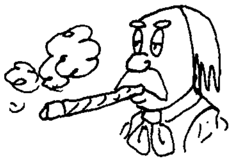




"It's become something of a trend," Nazareth told us.

An enormous personal-injury lawyer came in. He was carrying a little bottle of water to drink while he smoked his cigar. "I usually stop in once a day, at the end of the day, to unwind," he said. "It's the only place I can smoke a cigar. There's a certain camaraderie here that's hard to find elsewhere. Guys don't want to sit around all day in bars and drink. They need a place to go and get away and relax. Bullshit with the guys. I used to smoke in my office, but they've made my building a non-smoking building now. So it doesn't happen anymore."

"Moon River" was playing on the radio. There was a bottle of cognac and a copy of *Playboy* on the coffee table. A Beverly Hills building contractor who was wearing cowboy boots made from the skin of an exotic animal came in. A guy in the food business came in. An English guy who takes photographs of naked women for *Hustler* and *Penthouse* came in.



Nazareth asked him, "Would you say you would rather have a good cigar than good sex?"

The *Hustler* guy said, "I would never say that. I'd rather have a good cigar *after* sex. During, it's very hard."

Nazareth said, "My wife likes the smell of a good cigar."

The Doris Day guy said, "My wife doesn't mind my smoking cigars. She likes it."

The personal-injury lawyer said, "My wife hates cigars. My kids, too. When I come home tonight, my kids are going to say, 'P.U., Daddy! You've been to Nazareth's!' " ♦

GRUPPO GFT
Calvin Klein

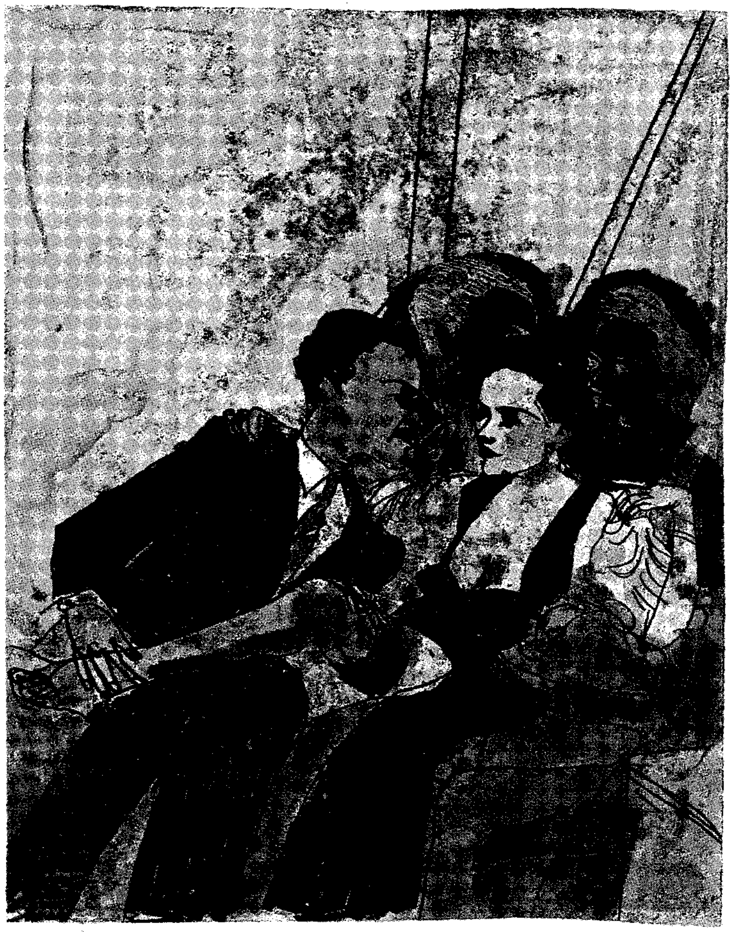
ELEMENTS OF FILM

VARIATIONS ON SEX

For a puritanical nation, America has an amazingly high tolerance for all sorts of onscreen sex—except when it starts to get old.

BY HAROLD BRODKEY

AH, beware the hard-eyed, merciless fan. You might say that the will to be beautiful, to be considered beautiful, to be sexually efficacious as an image and irresistible (to a large audience) and to be exploited for it—and then to escape from this exploitation—makes up the history of those people who become Hollywood symbols of the first rank. But if the escape is complete—into success, say, or into experienced professionalism and age—then the whole apparatus of Hollywood illusionism about life and beauty and the movies and us and the stars breaks down. Control and self-preservation, even ease, seem stupid as they age. Actors, men and women both, are said to be ageless, and seem so for much of their careers—uncertainly thirty, tautly forty, liftedly fifty, and so on—if by ageless we mean of no known human age.



ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

But a lot of the older actors start to look alike; they probably have the same surgeon. Errol Flynn, who in a way seemed safe from ridicule because he was so relaxed about himself and his stardom, became something of an international joke as he aged: he seemed not virile but, rather, unimaginative, or insectoid, with pathetic eyes and a foolish laugh. The gauntly beautiful Gary Cooper became fatuous, a manly and sadly tireless boy whose lechery was still clean, jowls and tough, slightly loony eyes and all—and he was too old to be clean that way. Cary Grant was an always sexually available form of male evasion: he never played a role in which what you saw sexually was what you got sexually, you or his co-star. But that image of a man who was attractive yet hidden became too stiffly formulaic as he aged, though he lasted a long time as a viable icon. What he seemed to be hiding then were not depths of sexual response but symptoms of joint pain and creeping exhaustion. The youthfully Bronxy Tony Curtis was sexually glib, and then, as he aged, the glibness came to seem more a response to his own celebrity than to the story in front of him. Cagney's ironic male acquiescence and violent slyness faded in interest, as you might expect in a smallish, potbellied, oldish man. No big star is a snob onscreen, but the audience *is* snobbish, and capricious, which is to say it is capable of punishing the loss of attraction, the loss of a sexual future in the star. Even the skillful Spencer Tracy, who had never been overtly sexual onscreen, lost it.

Of the old stars, Olivier came closest to cleverly denying the inroads of age, I think because he had for so long used humiliation—as Heathcliff, Lord Nelson, Richard III, Othello—as his particular gothic-romantic territory. The British poetry of humiliation, not as rage or failure but as triumph of the human spirit, carried him for a long time. And then, at the end of his playing a fully sexual man onscreen (the joke is a curious one), he co-starred with Marilyn Monroe in "The Prince and the Showgirl." There was Monroe—as perpetually precoital as Garbo was perpetually postcoital—with her highly professional but self-goaded, joyously half-mad exhibitionism and her overstuffed body, making no admission that life could occur between the promise of sexual bouts. She was flauntedly open, and yet as unreachable by courtship as Brando.

Olivier not only failed to command Monroe's interest but failed to respond to the hugeness of the sexual image she projected worldwide. He should have known that Monroe never made an interesting movie that concerned a relationship, never really played a scene that involved a relationship. What Olivier knew about sexual attraction and humiliation and what Monroe knew about them didn't match; she offered a seeming ignorance of her humiliations, a brainless triumph. What *you* saw were rival prides, rival prerogatives, rival royalties. And in the rivalry Monroe—who never judged a man onscreen—won out with the audience, and Olivier seemed old and pretentious.

ATTEMPTS to coöpt age and humiliation: take Bogart and Hepburn in "The African Queen." She has written that her friendship with John Huston, the director, was intimate. If she had brought real sexuality to the movie, it would have been much more interesting, more human, and funnier and deeper than it was, rather than having to carry in scene after scene the tremulous sexlessness, the would-be comic chastity of her character—that utterly false chastity which Hepburn, who did better than most Hollywood stars at the age thing, perversely used to suggest age. She was a mess, a harridan head-on, an essentially obstinate virgin spinster. Hepburn's nasal escape from, and superiority to, sex did not embody a change in experience or a lessening of heat but an I-never-had-any-sort-of-experience outcry. It was this quality that made and kept her a star, a radiantly irritating pain in the neck. But could a virgin spinster enslave Bogart? The Bogartian hero—alcoholic masochism, cynicism, and all—was not a sucker. He was superior to his own sexual subjugation (except, of course, as wartime patriotism, in "Casablanca"). I mean, Bogart as slave, sure, but to fleshier women with large lips, Bergman and Bacall. He projected a physical self-assuredness, physically, phallically. He didn't care about many things, he was intelligent and shrewd, and he had talent. He could be old-fashioned about a woman; he was a withholder, a successful one, truly male in that ancient, ever popular sense.

It is curious watching Harrison Ford grow older onscreen. His movies have been more successful, on the whole, than those of any other star, but they have had to be adventure movies, and he has had to be boyish, an action star of a new kind. He cares about everyone; clothes and haircut matter to him. He has a sort of rumpled face—rumpled like Jeanne Moreau's. In seven of Hollywood's twenty-one top-grossing movies, he is a messiah figure, successful in the story but—unlike, say, Eastwood—softly, reasonably so: not a killer.

He has wholesomely adolescent attachments to women—to Princess Leia, Melanie Griffith, to various sirens. He seems classless and, in a way, shapeless: without angst, without even the sensitivity of Tom Hanks. He *is* ironic toward duty, but he always does it. He is effectual but not dictatorial—or tortured. His messianism is along the lines of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"—someone out of place, out of time, and with special information, not from braininess but just from being an American.

His roles require him to lie a lot and to be the wrong age for the part he's playing. He is a certain kind of honest and impossibly robust impostor, but he is in no way dysfunctional. He wins. He does sex scenes, but the over-all effect, somehow, is that it stays in his pants. He doesn't display himself enticingly—that isn't within his range. He has no shadow of sexual ambiguity in any usual sense—yet his roles allow for an emotional acceptance of a kind of quietly healthy, almost Boy Scoutish homosexuality, such that "The Fugitive" can be seen as a homosexual allegory. He is gender-liquescent, unsplendid, deft. So far, no one has become a star playing with him, but Sean Connery wasn't harmed, nor was Tommy Lee Jones, and, because Ford doesn't do much publicity or because he is not publicizable, the media seize on those other guys, while he remains somehow secret, nonexistent. He is purer than Mary Pickford, than Charles Laughton.

Ford was predicted, from a wounded distance, by Fellini, in his movies—but also by the excesses of Pasolini, by Bertolucci and Fassbinder, Godard and Truffaut, and Tony Richardson—as the man beyond limits, the true heir and modification of American heroism, successor to Gary Cooper, the man uncompromised by sexual problems, disappointments, hangups.

There is another pathway to this iconography of sex-is-no-big-deal—not European—but leading from John Wayne, when he was getting up there in years, and Montgomery Clift, in "Red River." The supposedly phallically minuscule Clift, who seems to have suffered over his phallic insufficiency—the p.i. factor—like nobody's business, co-starred only once with the reputedly less than virile Wayne, who never seemed to suffer over it at all but, rather, put out a foliage of half-civilized male beauty and friendly conceit and boastful masculinity that flourished for decades.

"Red River," which was directed by Howard Hawks, is a fable, an unreal projection of a pretty son and a potent father reacting to their struggle with each other. In the grip of mad, Hawks-driven magic, the two men (one a great actor, one a great star) parade themselves brilliantly along a fault line of humiliation—the father humiliated by the sen-

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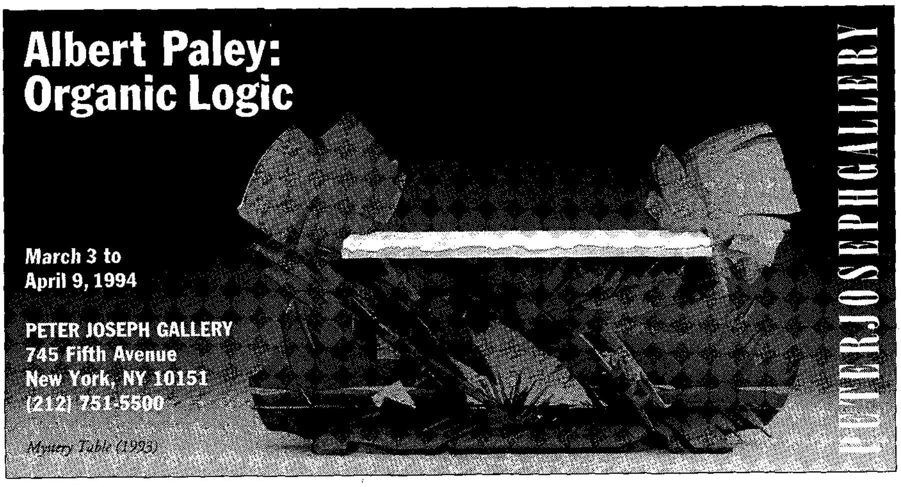

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Mystery Table (1993)

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sitivity of his son, the son humiliated by the potency of his father—to a state of purity, where sex is no longer the issue. Harrison Ford inherited this purity, and it is not a naïve construction, or an unconscious or accidental one. It isn't the untouchability of the star. His screen manner disclaims sexual secrets. But he is also beyond concern about sex. Publicity can't yet touch this quality, and perhaps age can't wither it. We will see.

IT is interesting to look back at Julia Roberts at the beginning of her life as a star. "Pretty Woman"—charming and popular, the most popular expression so far of fucking your way *up*, aloft, in the world—lies, in order to be charming, about the whole procedure. The corporate-raider figure is not someone who has been too busy for sexual love and has been sexually cheated or denied—he is not a sexual fool with a mad sense of power and a narcissistic delight in himself and a fear that he is a freak. He looks far more experienced sexually than the Julia character, the prostitute, far more experienced and further out sexually. Roberts is not given the power that Monroe took in "The Prince and the Showgirl."

The reversal makes the movie operetta-like. A whoring-tycoon Prince Charming is one of the least possible human characters I can think of—like a truly, deeply musical S.S. man—but the fantasy tickles. The tycoon rescues her, not she him. He does not need her sexually, he sets her free: the naïve and honest child of the streets is set free—to shop.

I *liked* the movie. I like this kind of movie, this sort of lie. I like denial flicks—no sex, no sorrow, no death. Or the ones where the men are too manly to be stirred by sex—"Citizen Kane"—and Katharine Hepburn movies and some Audrey Hepburn movies, in which the women are too proud and intelligent to be prey. I like down-with-sex movies, like Fellini's "La Dolce Vita," with Mastroianni as a desolate bystander. An American image of the desolation of men, while suggesting a rather sorry moral loneliness, is different—is a baseball team on the field, nine men set widely apart, waiting, galvanized briefly by a ball in play, and then waiting again in the sunlight, widely separate and with their own territories and their own thoughts. Or there is the desolation of Bruce Willis, Tom Cruise, Dustin Hoffman, but this is the desolation of fast-talking trespassers, of small, clever men.

WHY grow up when you can be as-if-young and rich and famous and powerful and all the rest of it for a long time? Look, perhaps no one and no art form grows up. But you haven't a lot of choices: you get older or you die. Movies have choices. Movies are anti-classroom, anti-workplace. They are time off, time out, masturbatory-hallucinatory, subversive; they are acts of genuine deconstruction, having to do with desire of some sort. Why the hell should they be realistic about sexual cause and effect? Or about humiliation? Or about how men and women change decade by decade? Movies' sexual madness is a great relief from genital logic. (We assume that in the world, too, the stars really *are* sexy and have the best sex and have a regal extent of sexual choice. We "know," suspect, can imagine, that on the plane of daily reality the actors and directors and producers are fucking around all they want. We are startled when it is only about Heidi Fleiss.) Movies play with time, dispense with common sense, they exert but also exorcise the will, they change power, and even biology, around—this is a source, a cause of their popularity, and their popularity alone may be the sign of their great, great greatness. The feel-good element in American movies is the beauty of the indulgence of the will without one's being sent to Hell: there isn't an equal counterreaction, except a slap from reality, now and then, outside the movie theatre.

But movies demand of stars a certain suppleness and availability. You can reorganize the sexual elements, but you have to be young. Responsiveness can't be faked. One sees stars outgrow it and become resistant rather than responsive, obstinate rather than available. This can't be hidden. And when too much intelligence and pain and self-control begin to show—in the face and in the body, in the eyes and in the voice—a kind of dismissal from the kingdom of illusion begins. You have to be a risk-taking and eager fool to be a star in a medium that insists on such availability; you have to be shrewd as hell. A pastime slower but crueller than watching gladiatorial combat is watching the stars deal with or fail to deal with age, and struggle to preserve the slippery images that entertain us so.◆

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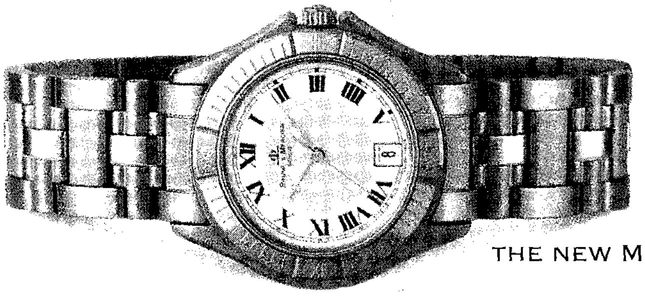

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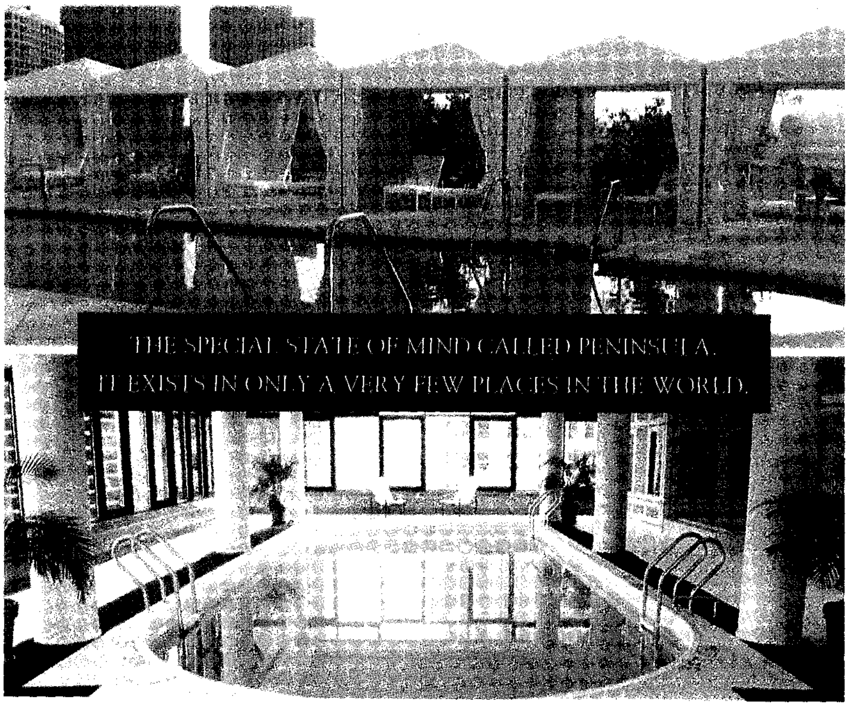
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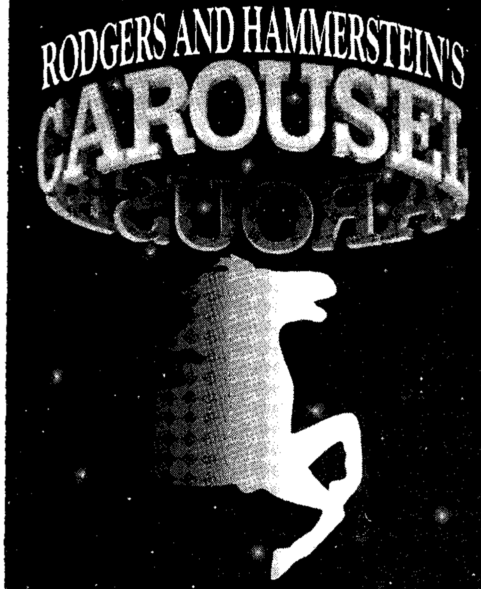

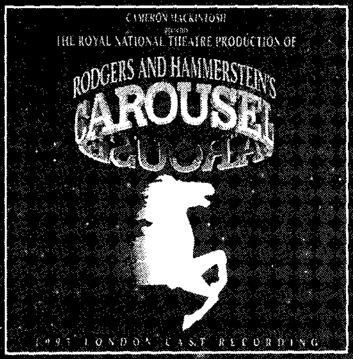
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ANNALS OF SHOWTOWN

RETURN OF THE MOGUL

John Calley walked away from Hollywood more than a decade ago. He was lured back by the top job at United Artists—and found a very different industry.

BY DAVID OWEN

JOHN CALLEY was feeling overworked. It was the early seventies, and he was the head of film production at Warner Bros. He went to his boss, Ted Ashley, and asked, "Couldn't we find someone to share my job?" They invited an executive from another studio to come in and talk.

"What would my title be?" the executive asked.

"Anything you like," said Calley.

"How about executive vice-president in charge of worldwide production?"

"Fine," said Calley.

"But what would your title be?" the executive asked.

"I could be senior executive in charge of production," Calley said.

The executive scowled. "What if I want to be senior executive in charge of production?"

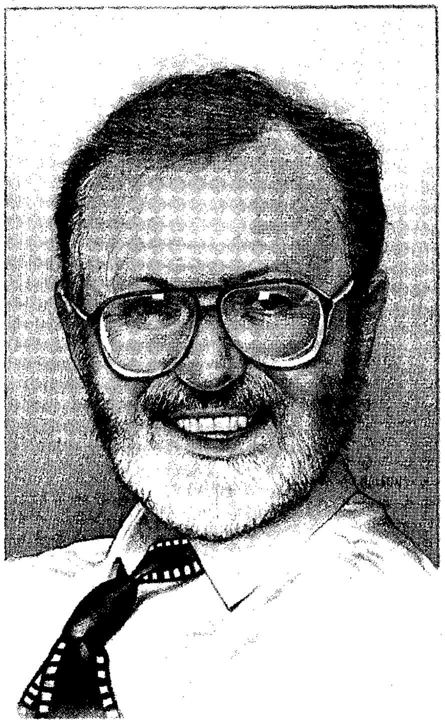
"Fine," said Calley. "I'll be executive vice-president."

There was a long silence. The executive looked from Calley to Ashley and back to Calley again.

"Look," said Calley. "If you like, we can call me your assistant."

I heard this story from the director Mike Nichols, who is Calley's best friend. He told me, "This other executive couldn't conceive that there was someone in Hollywood who didn't care what his title was. He thought there had to be a trap, but he couldn't find it, and it worried him so much that he turned down the job. But John was absolutely sincere. He's not about his own ego, or his tailor, or his Gulfstream, or his standing. The source of his power is that he doesn't give a shit."

In Hollywood, any movie executive who doesn't go around actually strangling other people runs the risk of acquiring a reputation as a humanist. Calley, who is now the president of United Artists, has such a reputation, but its origin is more complicated. Michael Ovitz, the head of Creative Artists Agency, who credits Calley with providing some of the first big breaks in his ascension to lord high suzerain of the entertainment universe, says Calley is "frighteningly egoless." David Cornwell, who is better known by his pen name, John le Carré, says, "John Calley is a truly extraordinary and fascinating man. When I am with him, he reduces me to an admiring silence." (Calley is the only person to whom Cornwell has ever shown a work in progress.) Candice Bergen once laughed so hard while having dinner with Calley, in Rome, that she literally fell out of her chair. Sydney Pollack says, "I don't think there's ever been a director who made a film with John who didn't want to come back and make a film with him again." From other people, at other times, I have heard Calley described as a dazzling currency trader; a man who has an unusual affinity with animals; a gifted mathematician; a control freak; the only movie



Working with Calley, the screenwriter Jay Presson Allen says, "is like rolling in feathers."

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Last September, when Calley became the president of United Artists, it was a movie company that had nearly been driven into bankruptcy by dreadful management. Many people in Hollywood viewed the appointment as a brilliant move, but they were nonetheless surprised by it, because Calley had not worked in Hollywood during the previous thirteen years. In 1980, after eleven years at Warners, he had done something that wealthy, powerful people often talk about doing but almost never do: he quit.

The story of how he quit is illuminating. In 1980, he was fifty years old and hadn't made a will, and his lawyer told him he needed one. Calley was then married to a non-English-speaking Eastern European movie star. Their relationship had been lengthy but difficult. (Calley says, "As I left the house each morning, I used to holler over my shoulder, 'I'm very unhappy—please think about leaving me.' ") The thought that his client might suddenly perish intestate filled the lawyer with alarm. The two of them got together one afternoon, each with a pad of paper, and began to tot up Calley's assets. His annual salary at Warner Bros. was paying Calley more than two million dollars and he had a pile of other treasure that he had accumulated over the years. After doing some preliminary arithmetic, Calley said, "Could we postpone this meeting?"

"Why?" the lawyer asked. "I've cleared the afternoon."

"Because I don't want to do it anymore," Calley said.

"But I thought we agreed that you need a will."

"Not the will," Calley said. "The studio job."

Calley went back to Warner Bros., and told a studio higher-up he had just found out that he had so much money he didn't need to work anymore. He said he wanted out of the seven-year contract he had just signed.

"What are you going to do instead?" the executive asked.

"I have no idea," Calley said, and then he said that his life had become so frantic that he no longer had a clear sense of who he was.

The executive listened, then said, "Let's do me." So they got out two pads of paper.

"Would you be willing to stay for six months?" the executive asked when they had been working for a while.

Calley frowned. "I suppose so," he said. "But why?"

"Because I want to quit, too."

"But it was my idea!"

The other executive quit almost immediately. Within a year, Calley left, too. When he did, Warners offered him a consulting-and-producing contract worth six figures annually in exchange for an agreement not to work for anyone else.

"Save your money," Calley said. "I'm not going to work at all."

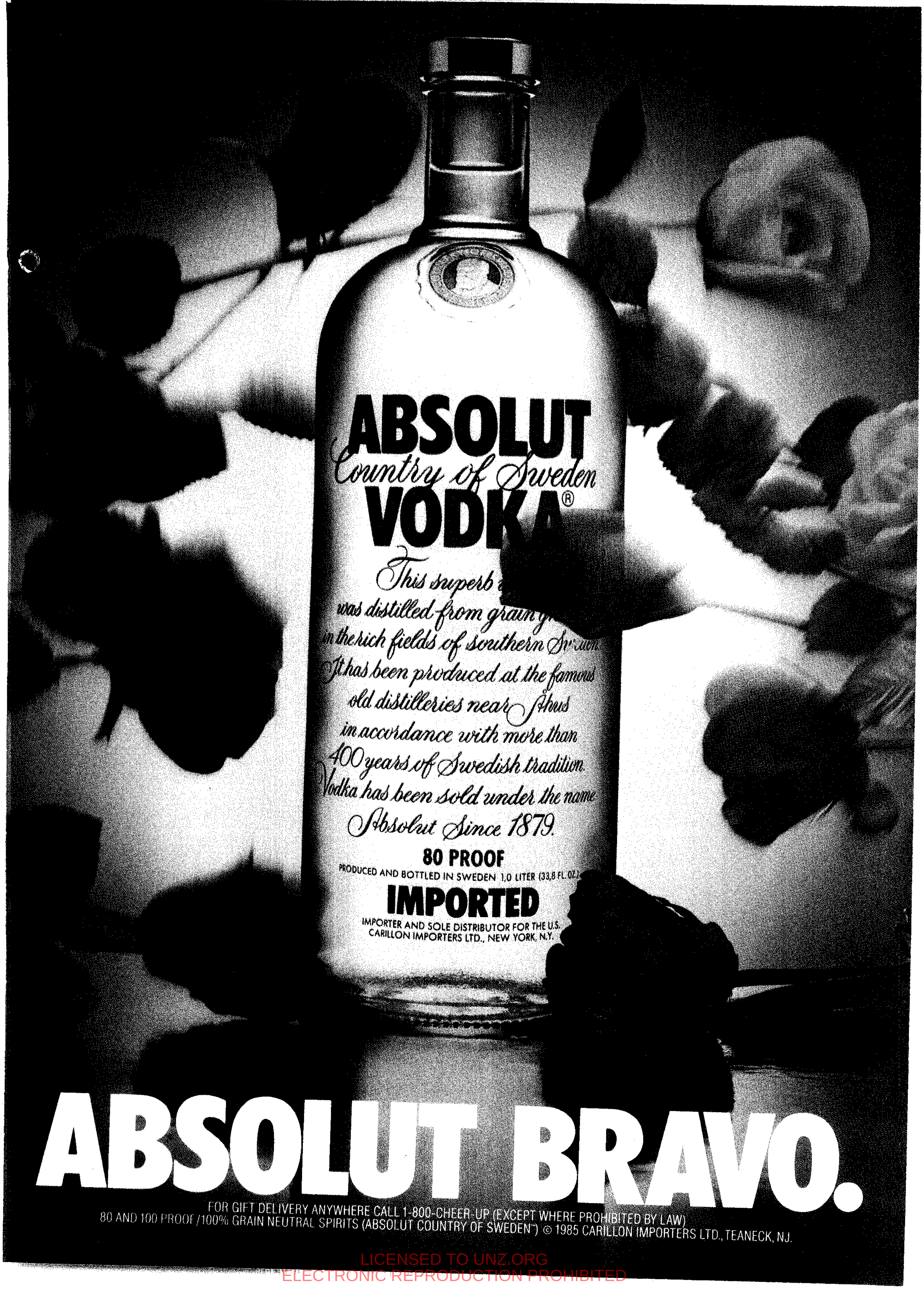
Warners upped its offer. Calley protested again. Warners upped its offer again. Calley threw up his hands and accepted the money.

Calley took to retirement in a big way. His marriage broke up. (His wife became involved with a young European actor for whom Calley later got a job as a yacht broker in the South of France.) He sold his house, his furniture, his car, and his dog to his lawyer. ("He even bought the stuff in my medicine cabinets. I think that what he really wanted was my life.") He began spending the winters alone in a thirty-five-room house he owned on Fishers Island, in Long Island Sound. He spent his summers sailing to various places around the world, sometimes living on his boat for six months at a time. He stopped wearing a watch. He took long walks and read voraciously. He fell in love with Sandy Lean, who was the last ex-wife of his old friend Sir David Lean, the director. With Sandy, he lived on Fishers Island and in Los Angeles, Gstaad, and London, among other places, then moved into a two-hundred-year-old house in a small town in rural Connecticut. He occasionally dipped a toe back into Hollywood, mainly by making movies with Nichols—their last project before Calley took the job at United Artists was "The Remains of the Day," which they co-produced with Ismail Merchant—but for the most part he avoided the entertainment business, seldom even going to movies. Then, last summer, the chairman of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, which owns United Artists, called to ask if he would consider running a studio again. After thinking it over, Calley said yes.

Many movie executives would be happier if movies could be made without actors and directors, whose high prices, big egos, and alarming personal habits make the entertainment business so risky and stressful, in the opinion of the executives. The animosity is mutual. Most actors and directors would be happier if their fifty-million-dollar movie bankrolls came unaccompanied by short, whiny guys wearing three-thousand-dollar suits. Calley is unusual in that he has avoided these bad feelings almost entirely. He is admired by other executives for his business acumen and his enviable record at Warner Bros. (Ovitz says that Calley, Ashley, and Frank G. Wells—who was Calley's partner at Warners and today is the president of the Walt Disney Company—constituted "probably one of the greatest teams ever in the business.") In addition, he is revered by filmmakers for being unusually knowledgeable about the actual process of making films.

"There's nobody like John," the screenwriter Jay Presson Allen, who has worked with Calley often, says. "He is very smart, and he is funnier than most of the people who make big money writing comedy, and he is always on the artist's wavelength. When I get stuck on something I'm working on, even if I'm just marginally stuck, I will pick up the phone and call him, and he'll have a hundred ideas in a minute. He is very seductive, and he is totally nonjudgmental, and he makes you want to do what he wants you to do—but, at the same time, he is so benign. He is a facilitator. Working with him is like rolling in feathers."

JOHN CALLEY looks less like a Hollywood executive than like, say, a professor of pediatric surgery. He has a neat beard and mustache and grayish-brownish-reddish hair. He wears glasses with the kind of wire frames that look a little like tortoiseshell. He has blue eyes. His features, and especially his eyes, seem youthful, and if you ignore the facial hair you can see what he must have looked like as a kid—something that isn't true of everyone. When he sits down to talk, he likes to lean way back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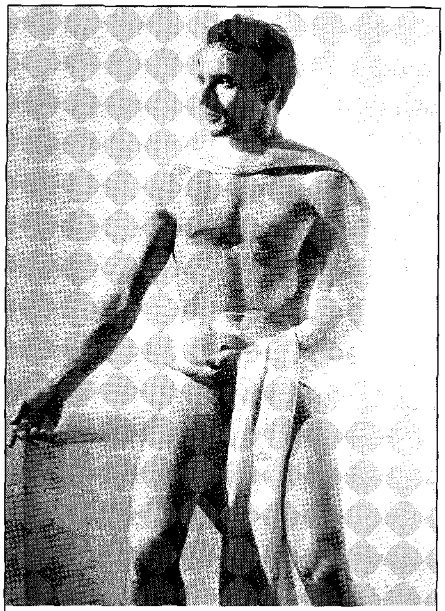

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and put his feet up on whatever is in front of him. He is sixty-three years old—an age that strikes him as a virtual mathematical impossibility, given that he remembers being considerably younger just a little while ago. He tends to refer to other people as "creatures" or, occasionally, as "chaps"; neither term is fixed in meaning. If someone stuck a gun in his ribs in the M-G-M parking lot, he would call that person a creature when he told the story later, but he calls Nichols a creature, too. When he calls people creatures, he sounds like a zoologist describing the objects of his study. He himself is an object of his study. He once told me he is narcissistic, but that's not really right. He isn't fascinated by himself to the exclusion of others; he is fascinated by himself in the way that he is fascinated by others. When he told me how much money Warners had paid him during his final year at the studio, he wasn't boasting or trying to make me feel poor and ashamed. He was simply telling me an interesting fact about an interesting person who happened, in this instance, to be himself. Calley is the only person I know who sounds objective when he's describing his own accomplishments and emotional states. Or maybe that's not quite it. Maybe it's that when Calley tells a story about himself the Calley telling the story and the Calley in the story sometimes seem to be separate creatures.

Calley and Sandy Lean are currently living in a rented house next to the Hotel Bel-Air, but they still consider Connecticut their home. (The Mercedes-Benz that Calley drives in Hollywood has Connecticut plates.) As it happens, the small town in Connecticut where they live is the small town where I live myself. Over a period of several years, I had run into Calley a couple of times, at a cocktail party and a town meeting, but I didn't know what he did, except that I could tell that it had to do with lots and lots of money. The town where we live has a population of about four thousand. It's the kind of mythical-seeming New England village where people don't necessarily lock their doors when they go on vacation. Living here, I often have a feeling of mildly anxious contentment that I can only think to describe as self-envy.

The oldest parts of Calley's house were built in the seventeen-hundreds. The house is not far from the center of town, but when it's viewed from most angles it seems to be in the middle of nowhere. It has sweeping views of the surrounding farms and hills, and it is ornamented with barns, picket fences, and old stone walls. It looks like a Hollywood set, not like the setting for a Hollywood mogul. When I drove over to visit him not long ago, there had just been a big snowstorm, and light snow was still coming down, and the whole scene was so pretty it looked almost corny. Calley told me not to bother wiping my feet, but I took off my snowy boots anyway, and put them where they wouldn't drip on the nice wood floor. It was the first time I had a feeling that I would have many times subsequently: a feeling of being more protective of Calley than he seemed to be of himself. There were quite a few times during various interviews when he said things that made me think, Gee, should he really be telling me that? Calley seems to inspire this feeling in other people. Cornwell told me, "I rang up John once, and I happened to mention that I had caught a cold, and he said, 'Oh, I've got something good for that,' and the next day I received a package, in England, by overnight post. He is so generous that he is almost exploitable. I think all his friends have the feeling that they have to kind of protect him from his own generosity."

On the afternoon I visited him in Connecticut, Calley had the flu. (Sandy had the flu, too, and was upstairs in bed.) He was sitting in his library, a comfortable book-lined room with putty-colored woodwork and a nice old fireplace. He was leaning way back in a big couch and trying to track down the phone number of a certain lawyer, whose name he couldn't remember, so that he could give it to Sydney Pollack. Doing that involved making a number of phone calls—to Manhattan directory assistance, to the agent Sam Cohn, to Pollack's office, to Nichols, to several other people. That he was making these calls himself is characteristic. Finally, he figured out more or less who the lawyer was. I asked him why he had left Hollywood, and why he had decided to return.

"When I left Warners, what I wanted to do was create a vacuum and see what, if anything, would fill it," he said. "I stopped reading the papers, and I stopped watching television, and I developed not only a kind of interest in but actually a taste for obsessive disappearance into myself. It didn't scare me, but I found myself withdrawing more and more from life as we know it. I was developing an elaborate fantasy life and spending more and more time in it. And I liked that. But I began to think that it would be interesting to go back and see what effect, if any, an activist approach to life would have on me."

Several times during his exile, Calley had turned down chances to run studios. Why had he said yes to U.A.?

"One reason is that I like Frank Mancuso, who is the chairman of the parent company," he said. "Another is that I like the idea of chaos. United Artists was a mess, and I was intrigued by the thought of taking an object that had been allowed to become moribund and seeing if I could reanimate it. Because there was nothing there, I was able to keep my operation very small, and choose the people I wanted without having to fire a bunch of people I liked. I was also attracted by the fact that the company has to be sold in few years."

M-G-M/U.A. is owned by the French bank Crédit Lyonnais, which acquired the company in a foreclosure in 1990, and is required by American banking laws to relinquish control by 1997. Calley's deal is such that he could eventually make a huge amount of money, depending on how much the company is worth when it is sold. Calley already has so much money that he is in no danger of running out, but wheeling and dealing fascinates him. Even during the years when he was supposedly not working, he was avidly trading commodities and foreign currencies.

I asked him if Hollywood had changed much during the years he was away.

"Very much," he said. "One difference is that there now seems to be an industry of project development that never results in films being made. It's a kind of adjunctive world, in which screenplays are written by screenwriters whose work never gets made into pictures, and developed by directors who never direct pictures, and produced by producers who never produce pictures. It's a huge industry—the equivalent of the net business activity of very large corporations—and it occupies a great deal of the time of some studios, and I don't believe in it. I think the way movies get made well is when you have one person who is nuts about a property and is obsessive enough to guide the thing through the maze of horror that you have to negotiate in order to get a film made. I now have two of those obsessives working for me, and I'm an obsessive. We try to find things that strike our fancy, and then we do them."

"Other studios don't work that way?"

"No. The main reason, I think, is that the process of making movies has become more and more remote from the ownership of the companies. As a result, it has got harder and harder for a film-maker to find himself in a room with a person who can say yes. Instead, you have companies with layers and layers of people who can only say no, or at the very most they can say maybe, and nothing ever gets done. I would like to change that, and make the process more immediate and instinctive. If you are a screenwriter, and you have an idea or a screenplay that we like a lot, and we meet with you and say yes, then it means that we are making the movie. It doesn't mean that we are agreeing to have a further succession of meetings that could last for the rest of your life.

"One problem with Hollywood is that most of the people in studio jobs nowadays are afraid of the process of making movies. The actual fact of filmmaking is an alien thing to them. Here's how it goes: You're an executive, and you have a fantasy that you want to do a movie with, say, Stanley Kubrick. Maybe you love his films, or maybe you just think it would be good for your career to do a movie with Stanley Kubrick. So you go after him, and, through a series of miracles, you make a deal with him. What's your reaction? Not joy. It's 'Holy shit! He can murder me! I'll be the guy who made "The Proud and the Propeller" and ran four dillion dollars over budget! I'll be a joke!' It's a very curious and elaborate courtship. You try to get somebody to do a movie for you, but then, once that person commits to the project, you do

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everything you possibly can to neutralize him, so that he can't do what you've hired him to do in the first place. As a result, a lot of people in studio jobs spend a lot of their time trying to avoid what they are supposed to be doing. They are in an occupational niche that is very attractive and very lucrative, and they don't want to screw it up. So they get very cautious. They don't make many movies, because a movie that doesn't get made can't be a bomb. When they do make a movie, they try to make a sequel to something that worked, or they try to cast it in a way that leaves them feeling covered. They also try to build up four or five tiers of responsible executives under them, so that if their movies fail they will have several regimes' worth of people they can fire. They figure it will be eight or ten years before it's their turn. But the thing is, if you are good at the process of making movies, and you enjoy it, then you tend to want to do it yourself."

CALLEY'S office in California is on the fifth floor of a building in M-G-M Plaza, in Santa Monica. It is triangular, and the wall along the hypotenuse is made mostly of glass. Calley doesn't like the office very much, in part because the great big windows and the two acute corners complicate furniture placement. He has a desk, two tables, two couches, a few chairs, and a TV, but none of the furniture looks broken in. During the week when I visited him, he had been in the office a little over four months, but there was still nothing hanging on the walls. The severity of the décor reflected both how busy he had been and how relatively little he cares about looking like a studio president.

Calley hopes that United Artists will make roughly a dozen movies a year; none were in the works at the end of last summer, when he took over. For the first time in many years, he told me, he found himself waking up worried at four in the morning and reaching for a script. He had been away from Hollywood for a long time, and he needed to catch up in a hurry. "I would find myself sitting in meetings, jaw gaping, wondering who on earth people were talking about, and what the projects were, because I didn't know any of the names."

The need to get something going quickly led him to look first at material close at hand. A survey of the company's assets turned up forty-five thousand cartons of material, containing, among other things, a screenplay by Stanley Kubrick and production notes for an unmade film called "Napoleon" and unproduced scripts by Faulkner and Fitzgerald. The cartons are stored in a salt mine in Kansas, and an expedition from M-G-M and U.A. went to look. (Calley gave me a copy of a Fitzgerald script called "Infidelity." "Hopeless," says a character called Nicolas. "I'll get us a drink—then we won't care.") The cartons were mainly of historical interest, but the company also had a few potential projects lying around.

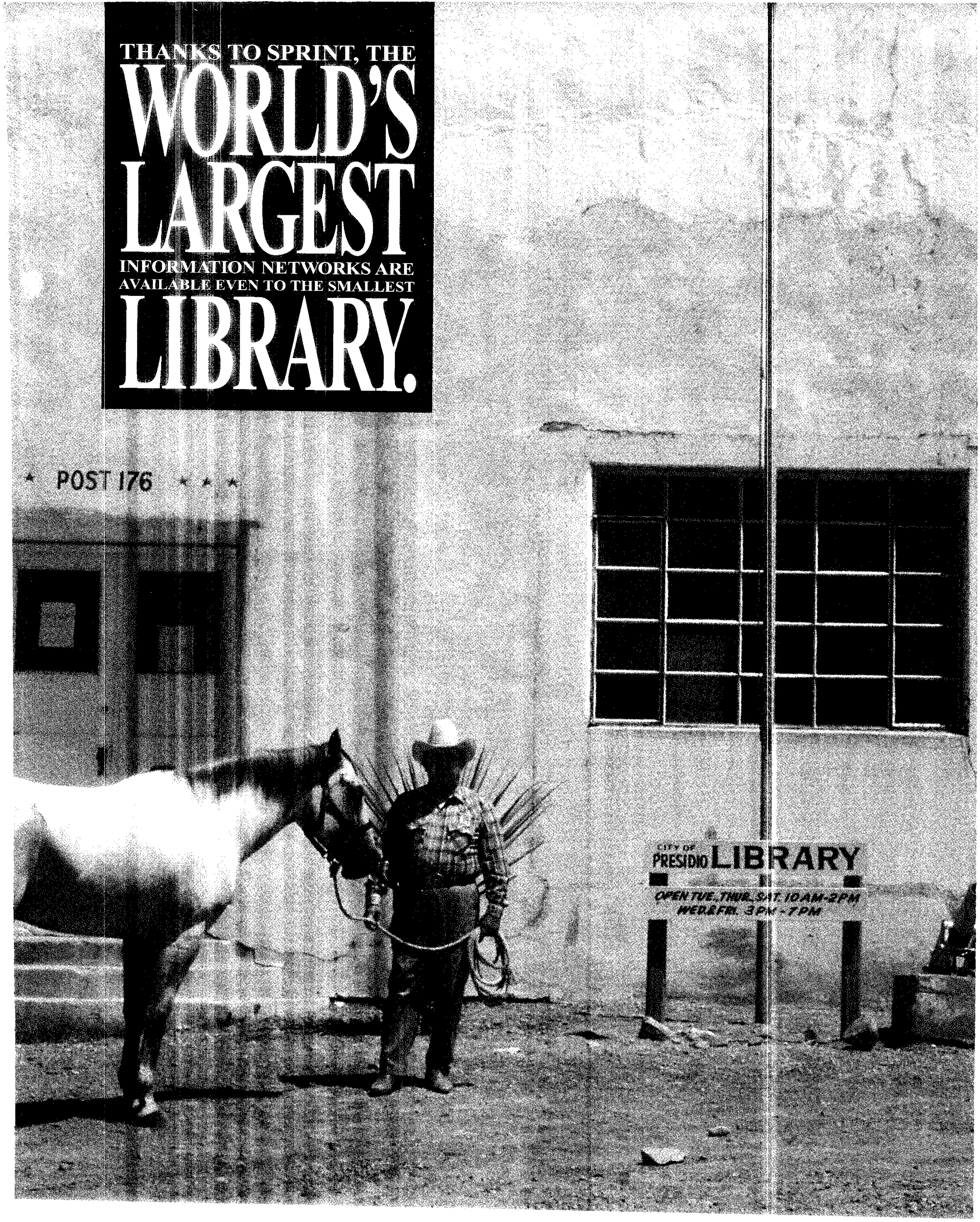
"Because this is a company that has made a number of films, there are obvious fantasies that you can get started with quickly, if you want," Calley told me. "For example, the company made 'Twelve Angry Men.' So you realize that you could change the sexual composition in the jury room—maybe substitute Michelle Pfeiffer for Henry Fonda—and make the case the Rodney King case. It would be a one-set, low-budget picture with star casting, and you could do it in a hurry. So you go back and find out what the rights are, and it turns out they're a nightmare—the thing is owned by about seventeen different people. So you look at 'The Magnificent Seven,' which was an enormously successful remake of 'The Seven Samurai,' and it has a structure that has worked over and over. It's a movie that everyone has made but called something else. Well, we own it, and we could make it again. Or you try to get Dustin to do 'Rain Man II.' "

Among the first projects that Calley actually signed were two movies that his two young vice-presidents brought with them. One is a teen-age computer adventure called "Hackers"; the other is "Tank Girl," a dystopian shoot-'em-up that is based on an underground comic book of the same name, and is a sort of combination of "Mad Max" and "Thelma & Louise." Each film will cost less than twenty million dollars to make, and both are ready to go.

"Neither of those movies sounds very much like 'Remains of the Day,' " I said.

"No, they're not. But you have to make a program of films. We have to get a rational distribution schedule up and running, and we need a picture a month, so you start with things that seem as though they would work commercially. I have a reputation for making a certain kind of

"Oh, I think Whoopi is a good choice, but I would have preferred Greenspan."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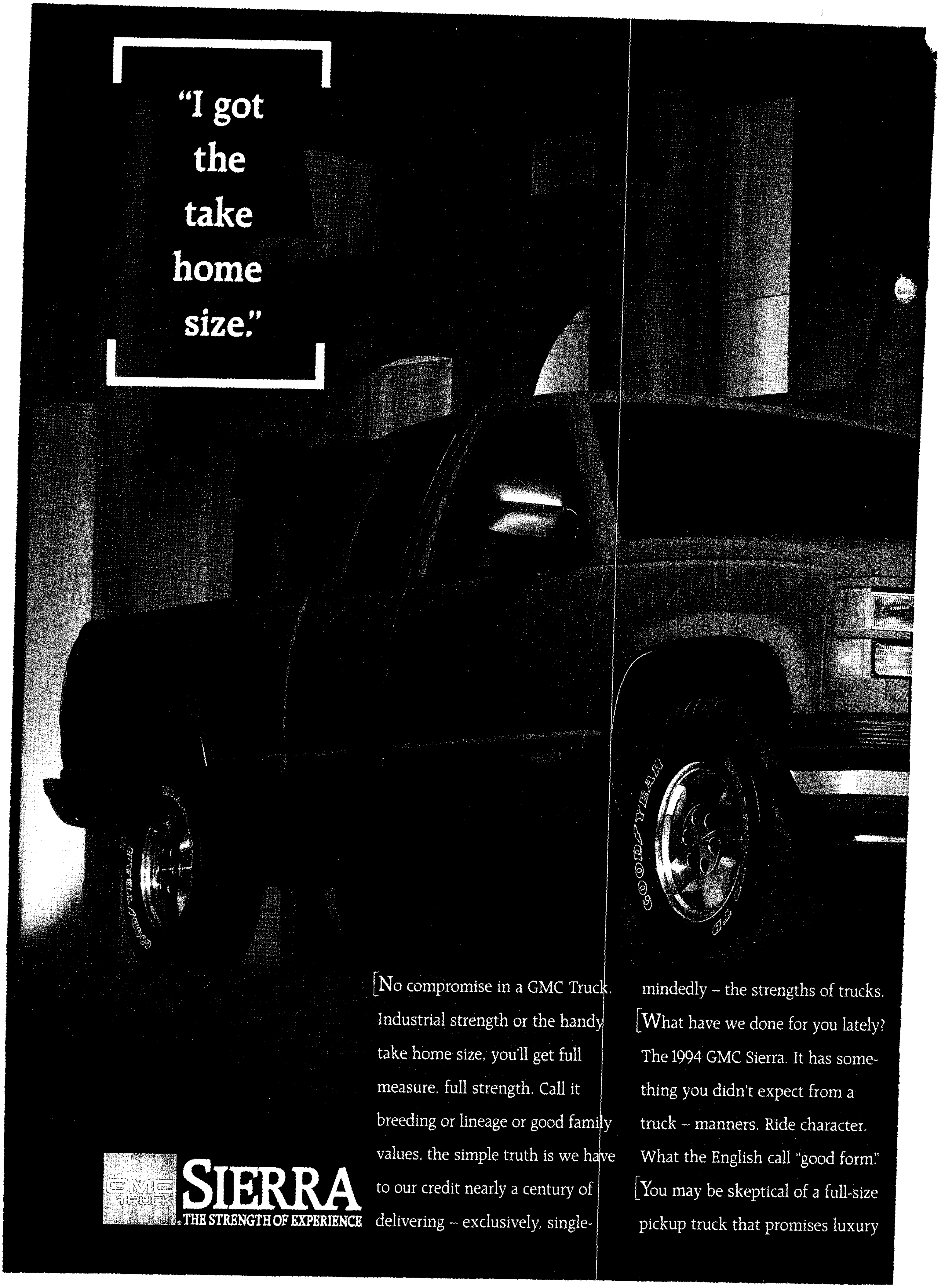

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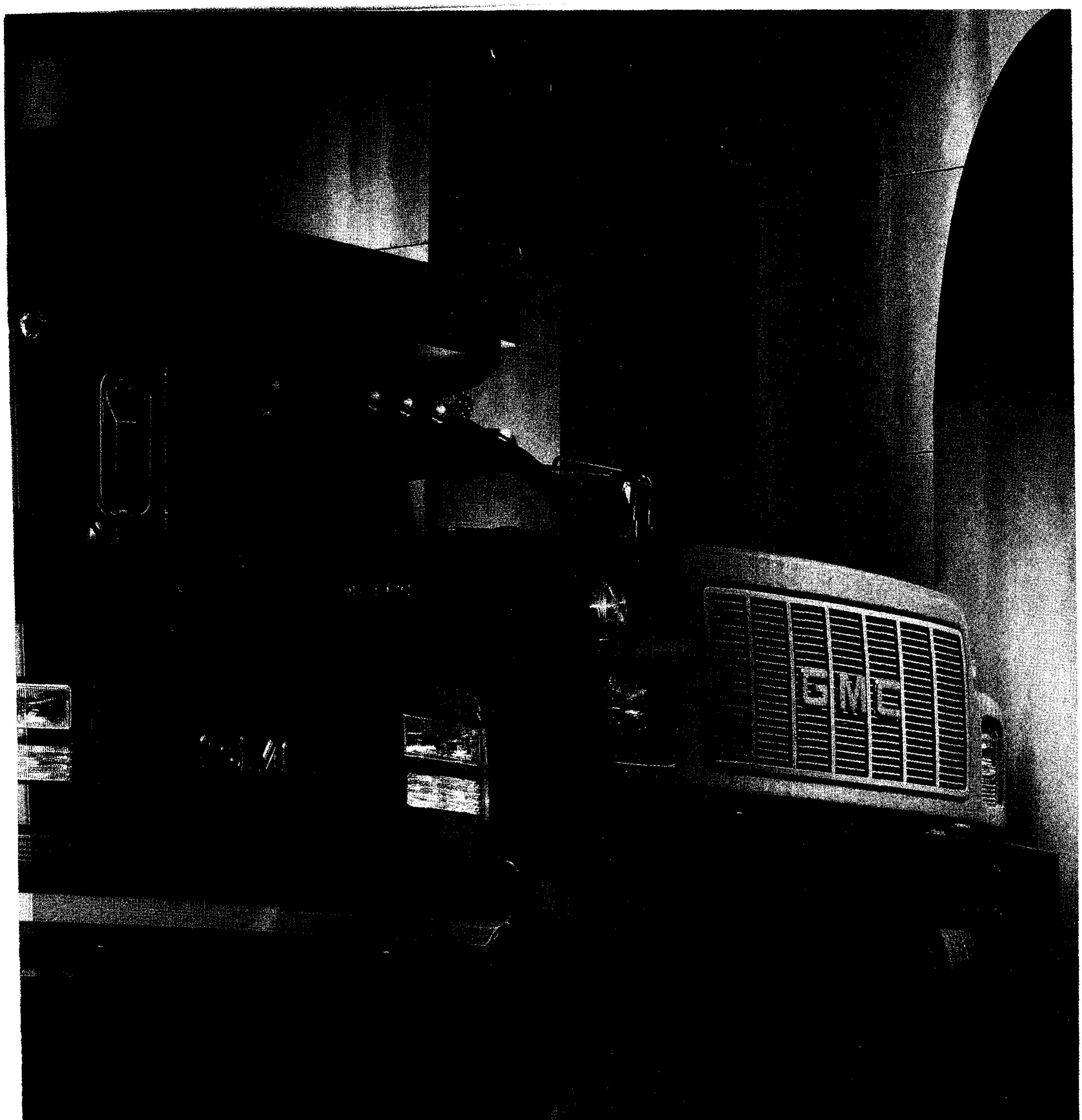

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film, but I also made the 'Dirty Harry's and 'The Exorcist.' If you are going to make one of these companies work, you have to do a lot of business, and you have to do it across the board."

OF all the unlikely paths that people have followed to Hollywood over the years, Calley's must surely be one of the most unlikely. "I was born in Jersey City in 1930," he told me one day as we were walking to lunch near his office. "You wouldn't want to live there. I always used to think, Gee, I'm glad I'm not me." He was an only child. His parents split up when he was six months old, and he was raised by his mother in a struggling Depression household filled with aunts and great-uncles and grandparents. "It was actually fun to be a kid growing up like that," he said. "My great-uncles and my grandfather used to take me for walks, and I used to sleep with one or another of them, moving from bed to bed. They were all in God's waiting room—cane-carrying men in their seventies. When I visited other children, I was always leery of their fathers, who in those days were often sitting around with nothing to do. Men in their twenties or thirties were always strange objects to me. I didn't know what those were. Mostly, the men I knew were old."

When Calley was thirteen, his mother married an Army doctor, who was transferred to California. Calley and his mother moved out to join him, but by the time they arrived he had been shipped to the South Pacific. They were nearly destitute. They lived in housing for itinerant fruit pickers, and Calley helped support the two of them, in part by becoming an assistant janitor at his high school. "That was a little strange," he said. "There's something horrible about filling the Kotex machine when the cheerleader you have a crush on comes walking into the ladies' room. But it was an O.K. job."

A couple of years later, Calley's stepfather returned, and the family moved back to New Jersey. He graduated from high school at sixteen and went to work in an ink factory. His natural father—with whom he had kept in touch sporadically—found out, and urged him to take a job in "the business" instead. Calley's father, who was called Jack, was a car salesman and restaurateur who had dealings with New Jersey mobsters, and "the business" for him comprised a variety of enterprises, including night clubs, laundries, and used-car lots. In the summer of 1947, Calley went to work detailing used cars.

"My father's life was very organized," he told me. "He was constantly getting haircuts, and having his nails clear-varnished. I said once that if he ever built a fire he would have to use tongue-and-groove wood, because he could never stand anything so chaotic as logs. He had a daily ritual, and he always followed it. Every day, he would drop by the car lot to have a cup of coffee with me and with Doc and Benny, who were the two guys who ran the place for him."

Jack Calley had recently married a beautiful young Polish-American showgirl called Ginny. One day when he arrived at the lot, he announced that Ginny wanted to have a baby. Jack Calley said, "The thing is, Ginny's a pretty girl, and she doesn't want to ruin her body, and we were wondering—is there a way that you could get a kid?" Doc made a couple of phone calls, then said, "If you can stick around for an hour, there's a guy on his way over who knows what to do." Jack Calley said that he would wait.

"About forty minutes later," Calley told me, "a really dank '38 Plymouth Business Coupé pulled up, and a young guy got out. He was a full-bore Navy vet, with tattoos, and a cigarette pack rolled up in the sleeve of his T-shirt. He took a bundle of rags out of the passenger seat and slammed the door. In the middle of the bundle was a kid, maybe ten days old. It was really scrofulous-looking, and the swaddling was filthy—but who knew? I mean, it was a kid."

Jack Calley examined the baby on a desk and said, "Let me ask you something, pal. What do you have to give for a kid like this?"

The vet pointed over his shoulder and said, "You've got a '48 Buick Super convertible. I'll trade you even up."

Doc said, "Are you nuts? This kid is like a '39 Chevy, tops."

A long period of haggling ensued. In the end, Jack Calley gave the vet a '47 Buick Roadmaster (minus fog lamps and spotlight) in trade for the child plus the vet's Business Coupé, which he gave to John. The last time Calley heard from his adoptive half-brother, he was working in upstate New York as a used-car salesman.

"Obviously, in conventional psychological terms this entire incident should have been anxiety-provoking for me, because I was the other child," Calley told me. "But the fact is that I had never lived with my father, and our relationship at that point was essentially that he was my employer. Anyway, this was my father's milieu. A couple of years later, I had dinner with him one night at El Morocco, in New York, and a friend of his came by with Joe Adonis, who was basically the head of the Mafia in this country. The Kefauver hearings were going on, and Adonis had been subpoenaed to testify. At some point during the meal, Toots Shor came over to our table. He was very drunk, as he always was, and, in his rasping, Irish, drunken voice, he bellowed, 'Adonis, you Guinea fuck! You wop cocksucker! How come you never come into my fucking gin mill?' This was his version of good nature, but I was thinking, Jesus, I'm going to witness a murder. I mean, Adonis was the No. 1 guy. But Adonis said, 'Toots, if I come into your joint with these hearings going on, do I help you or hurt you?' And Shor said, 'You're right, Joe, you're right,' and they embraced.

"My father's world was nothing like my mother's, and that was why they broke up. My mother grew up in a hard-nosed working-class Irish family where the men got up at four in the morning and went out and laid bricks until nine at night. She couldn't quite deal with the idea of a guy who hated to work."

"In your adult life, you've kind of emulated both of them," I said.

Calley said, "Yes, I can see both of their points."

ONE morning not long ago, David Cornwell and I ate breakfast at his hotel and then got lost driving around Los Angeles while I tried to help him buy an anti-glare screen for the monitor of his wife's computer. While I drove in fearful, tentative circles, Cornwell said, "I think that anybody who tells you amusing horror stories about his childhood is still dealing with the problem. I catch myself doing it as well, and I think it is one thing John and I have in common. I don't think anybody stayed in his early life for very long, and I sometimes wonder if these very men's sport

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funny stories that he tells are really fables to conceal a great deal of pain. I suppose that in quiet moments I would recognize John as a deeply sad man—sad in the sense of being pessimistic about the nature of humankind. I think his capacity for friendship and his amazing tolerance of bad behavior—which you have to have if you are working with artists, and particularly with actors and actresses—stem from some pretty heavy early bruising. You have the feeling that he escaped quite malevolent forces when he was young.”

Calley did two tours in the Army; after the second, he took a temporary job driving a school bus for a Catholic girls' school in New Jersey. He would drop off the girls in the morning, then catch a bus to Manhattan and check in at an employment agency. Finding a better job was complicated by the fact that he didn't have enough money to dress properly for interviews. He wore saddle shoes, khaki pants, a dirty Countess Mara tie, an old chesterfield coat, and G.I. glasses with stainless-steel rims. Finally, the employment agent announced triumphantly that he had found him a position, as a trainee at a textile mill in South Carolina. All that Calley had to do was drop by an office in the RCA Building the following day.

When Calley showed up to claim his job, the receptionist mistook him for a messenger, then laughed when he explained who he was. The receptionist's boss laughed, too, and after a whispered conference Calley was told that the position had been filled. His degradation was so swift that he still had a couple of hours to kill before catching the bus back to New Jersey. With nothing better to do, he decided to knock on doors in the building. The first one he tried was that of the NBC personnel department. “Quite naïvely, I asked if they were hiring, and this lovely, blue-gray-haired woman said, ‘Yes, as a matter of fact, we are.’ ” He was given a job as a mail boy for the Christmas rush. He worked hard and was kept on after the holidays, and was eventually promoted to a nighttime clerical job in which he assisted the people who supervised scenery for television shows. One day, Calley sent a memo to his supervisor pointing out that the company could save money if it built a dolly that would fit both into the elevators in the RCA Building and into the storage bays in the warehouse. “Your cat would have figured out that what they were doing was insane,” Calley told me. But no one had thought of it before. The change was made immediately, and the savings amounted to several hundred thousand dollars a year.

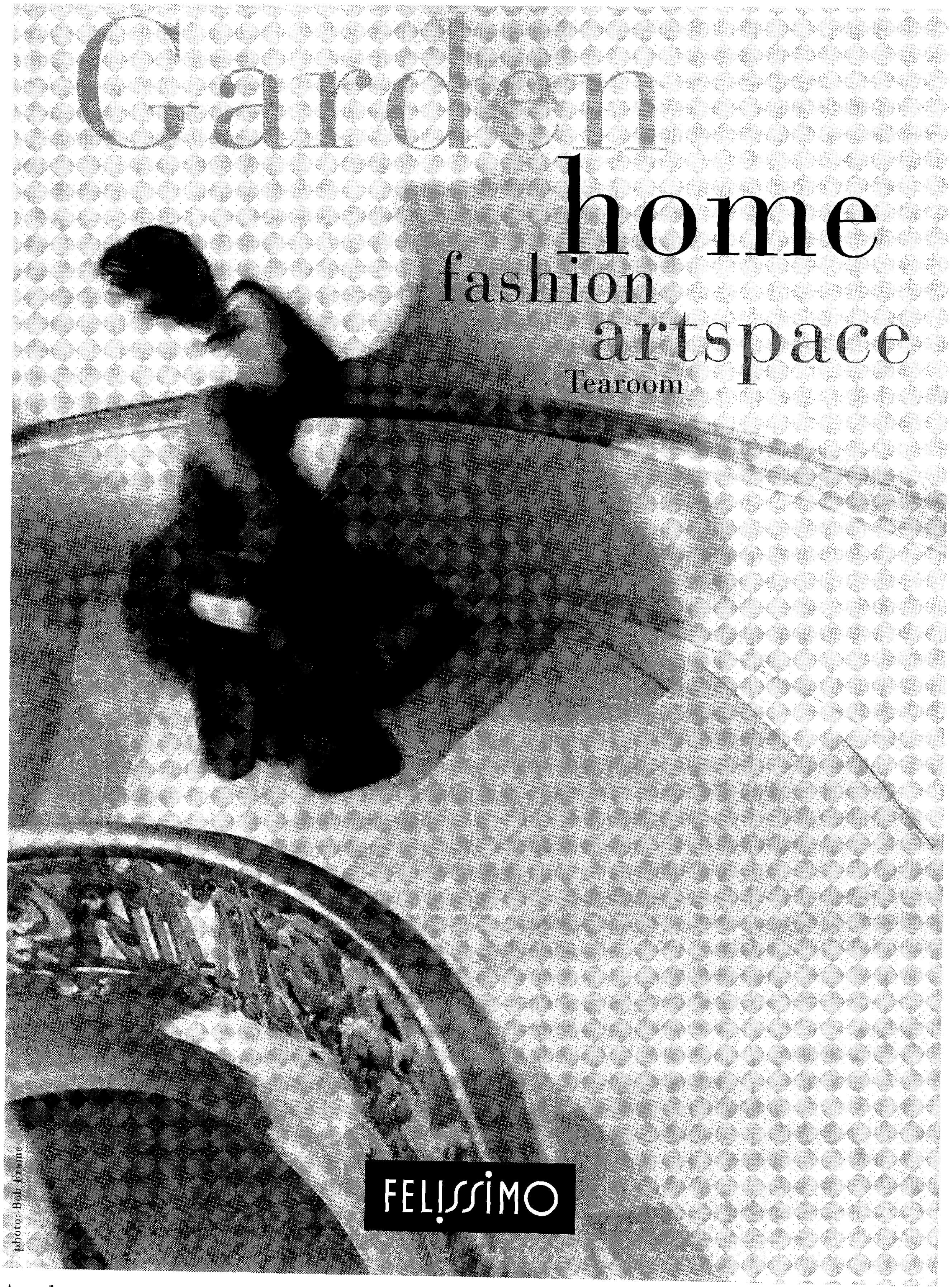
At that precise moment, the trajectory of Calley's career veered sharply upward. Over the next couple of years, he was given a series of increasingly responsible jobs. He soon became a production manager, then the assistant to the head of the network, then the director of program sales, then the director of nighttime programming. At twenty-seven, he was offered the job of vice-president in charge of programming, but turned it down to become a producer of television shows at Henry Jaffe Enterprises, in California. He worked in advertising for a while, in New York, then went back to California and became an executive and a producer at Filmways. His last project there was “Catch-22,” which Nichols directed and Calley co-produced. While that film was in production, he was approached by Ted Ashley about working at Warners.

During his eleven years at Warner Bros., Calley was involved in the production of approximately a hundred and twenty films. His taste was eclectic, and he developed a broad following among filmmakers. Because of him, Warners became the studio of choice of directors as different as Stanley Kubrick and Clint Eastwood. He did movies with Fellini and Visconti, and is widely credited in Hollywood with helping to create those filmmakers' American audiences. He also did “The Towering Inferno,” “The Exorcist,” and “Superman,” along with the usual assortment of turkeys.

Calley's “amazing tolerance of bad behavior”—to borrow Cornwell's phrase—was evident from the very beginning, and was clearly an important factor in his success. He rapidly developed a reputation for being able to handle “difficult” directors and actors. One of these was Steve McQueen, whom Calley adored as an actor but found trying as a human being. Typical was an incident in which McQueen walked off with two of Calley's electric razors. (“You get this shit for free, man,” he explained.) Calley told me over dinner one night, “I actually knew Steve when we were kids in New York. He was a bartender at Louie's when we were both nineteen or twenty, and it must be said for him that success didn't spoil him—he was a shitheel before he became a movie star. But as a movie star he was a nightmare. He got paid more than anybody in those days, but when you made a deal with him his attitude was that what you were really doing was renting his nude, filthy, unshaven body for however long the filming was going to last. If you wanted him to wash, you had to buy him soap and towels. If you wanted him clothed, you had to buy him clothes. So you would get these bills—forty pairs of Levi's, three hundred sweaters, underwear, socks, shoes, the whole works. And yet you paid them, because he had this incredible power on the screen. Real Gary Cooper stuff.”

Another difficult figure was Orson Welles. Calley met him during the filming of “Catch-22,” in which Welles played General Dreedle. “Orson and I became friends, and he was incredibly amusing to be with,” Calley told me. “But he was also an enormous pain in the ass.” Once, Welles asked Calley to have a limousine meet his plane on the runway, so that he wouldn't attract attention in the terminal. When the door of the plane opened, Welles was standing at the top of the stairs wearing a purple cape with a red lining and a Borsalino hat. “That was Orson being discreet,” Calley told me. “He looked like the Pope. Everybody in Los Angeles saw him get out of that plane.”

On a later occasion, Calley and Welles went to dinner at Matteo's. “That night, he was telling us wonderful stories about making ‘Citizen Kane,’ and about the old radio days, when he would play seven or eight different parts at different studios in an hour, and he would have to hire an ambulance to get him from place to place. Finally, the food comes, and in mid-story Orson takes a bite of his shrimp—and spits it across the room. We had a little Mexican waiter who didn't speak much English, and could scarcely speak anyway, because he had a terrible cleft palate, and Orson is screaming at him. ‘*What is this shit? Do you have any fresh food, you ap-*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palling asshole?' Then back to his story: 'So, I get in the ambulance— *Did you hear me? Don't you dare move!*' Finally, I couldn't stand it anymore, so I picked up my knife and said, 'Orson, if you don't stop this shit I'm going to drive this knife into my heart. You will be responsible for my death.' He laughed a bit at that. But he was awful. And also absolutely charming, if he wanted to be."

One of Calley's more difficult cases was Irwin Allen. In the late seventies, toward the end of Calley's years at Warner Bros., Frank Wells, Calley's partner, signed Allen to a three-picture deal. Not long before, Allen had co-directed "The Towering Inferno," a schlock epic that had made roughly a hundred million dollars. Wells figured that Allen was hitting his stride, but Calley had doubts.

"Frank was susceptible to the fantasy that moviemaking could be a rational business if only you could assemble the right elements," Calley told me. "And Irwin, to Frank, looked rational. But I was convinced that 'Inferno' was an anomaly. It was his only big hit, and it was the first time he had ever directed stars—Newman, McQueen, Astaire, and so forth—and it was clear that he was an ego running utterly amok."

Allen wanted to make a thriller called "The Walter Syndrome." It was the story of a homicidal maniac and a rogue cop, and it was to be made literally from the cop's point of view: the camera would be his eyes. This technique posed a problem, because the killer and the cop turned out to be the same person. Calley, Wells, and Ashley read the script and were dumbfounded. The cop had to be in every scene—how could he murder people off camera? But Allen was determined to make the movie, and his contract gave him the right. Wells and Ashley begged Calley to ask him to reconsider.

"Irwin had made Warners build him his own building, which was a weird three-story extravaganza out at the Burbank studios," Calley told me. "It was all redwood and glass, and it had a gilt door that looked like Norma Shearer's purse. Irwin didn't want to talk about the movie with me, but he did want me to see this monstrosity, so he said that I could come out." Allen gave Calley a lengthy tour of what he called his "environment," then led him through a door to an oval room. "Take off your shoes and socks," he said, giving Calley a look that filled him with apprehension. Then Allen opened a drawer and took out a pair of white athletic socks. He told Calley to put them on. "How do they feel?" Allen asked. Calley said, "Great." Allen said, "Ah, that's my point, which nobody gets. Every couple of hours, whenever I have a little downsy, I go and put on fresh socks."

Calley followed Allen back into his office and was handed a copy of the script of "The Walter Syndrome," bound in leather and embossed with gold letters. "Take your best shot," Allen said imperiously.

All morning long, Calley had been wrestling with the problem of how to discuss the movie with Allen. He believed that the reason Wells and Ashley had never got anywhere was that they had not taken sufficient account of Allen's elevated regard for himself. A moment earlier, though—while he was shuffling across the room in his new socks—Calley had had an idea. In a reverent tone, he said, "Irwin, I wouldn't presume to talk story with you, because of who you are—because you are Irwin Allen. I am just not that brazen."

Allen smiled gravely. "I understand."

Calley said that instead he would simply like to ask a question.

"I can't say I'm not intrigued," Allen said. "What is the question?"

"My question is this. Would Cecil B. De Mille have made 'The Walter Syndrome'?"

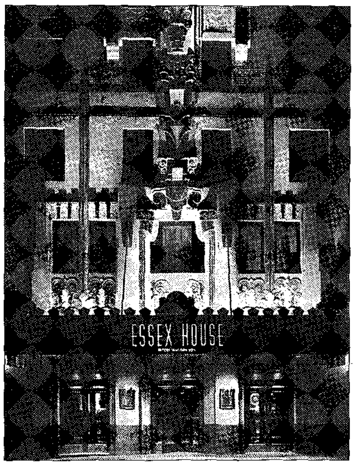
Allen closed the script and dropped it in the wastebasket. " 'The Walter Syndrome' is a closed issue," he said. The two men stood and hugged.

When Calley later told Wells that he had talked Allen out of making the movie, Wells was astonished. "How on earth did you do that?" he asked.

Calley shrugged. "We talked it through, and I said the script was a piece of shit, and he agreed. The guy's a pussycat."

WHEN Calley took the job at United Artists, there were people who said that he had been away from Hollywood so long that he wouldn't be able to get his bearings again. One producer, quoted anonymously in *Daily Variety*, said, "You need someone who gets up every day to kill. Do you think he's going to come in here from his home in Connecticut, having already

You may not remember,



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succeeded as an executive and producer, with the killer instinct?"

On the other hand, it may be that Calley succeeded the first time around in part because he didn't get up in the morning feeling murderous. What he likes is helping other people make movies—an activity that sometimes gets lost in the shuffle in Hollywood. It is true that Calley was gone for a long time, but his reputation sometimes gives him an advantage over those who stuck around. There are a lot of people in Hollywood and elsewhere who would actually *like* to make movies with him. One of these is Floyd Mutrux, a screenwriter whose credits include "Dick Tracy" and "Freebie and the Bean." Mutrux recently finished a script, called "Common Ground," about cops at Los Angeles International Airport. According to *Daily Variety*, the script was "much-coveted" and "the talk of Hollywood." Mutrux submitted it only to Calley, because he wanted to make the movie with him, and Calley bought it, for more than half a million dollars.

Since early fall, Calley has received a more or less steady stream of agents, producers, directors, and screenwriters. A typical appointment was a recent one with a producer named Harvey Bernhard, whose best-known movie is probably "The Omen." Bernhard came by one day with an armload of scripts and stayed for about half an hour.

"The first thing I'm going to give you is also at Columbia, Universal, and Warner Bros., and it isn't going to last a week," Bernhard said.

"Screenplay?"

"Yes."

"Great."

"I'll tell you the story. Years ago, before I made 'The Omen,' I ran into a property of research that is the true story of an Irish cop and a gorgeous Presbyterian missionary. The two of them broke up a Tong war in San Francisco in the twenties. John, I read 'Lethal Weapon' before Dick Donner did it, and this is better. That's how exciting it is."

Calley was leaning way back in his chair, with his feet up on the coffee table. "I have a wonderful title that I'm buying from Dashiell Hammett's estate," he said. " 'Dead Yellow Women.' Do you know the novella? I see pickets in front of the theatres, but I'm nuts about the title."

"It's a cop story," Bernhard said. "When a hooker was naughty, they

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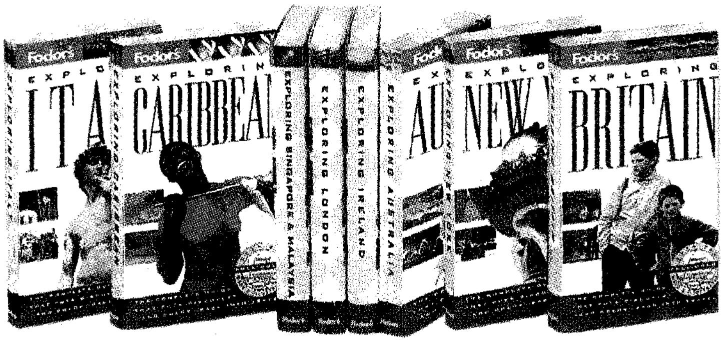

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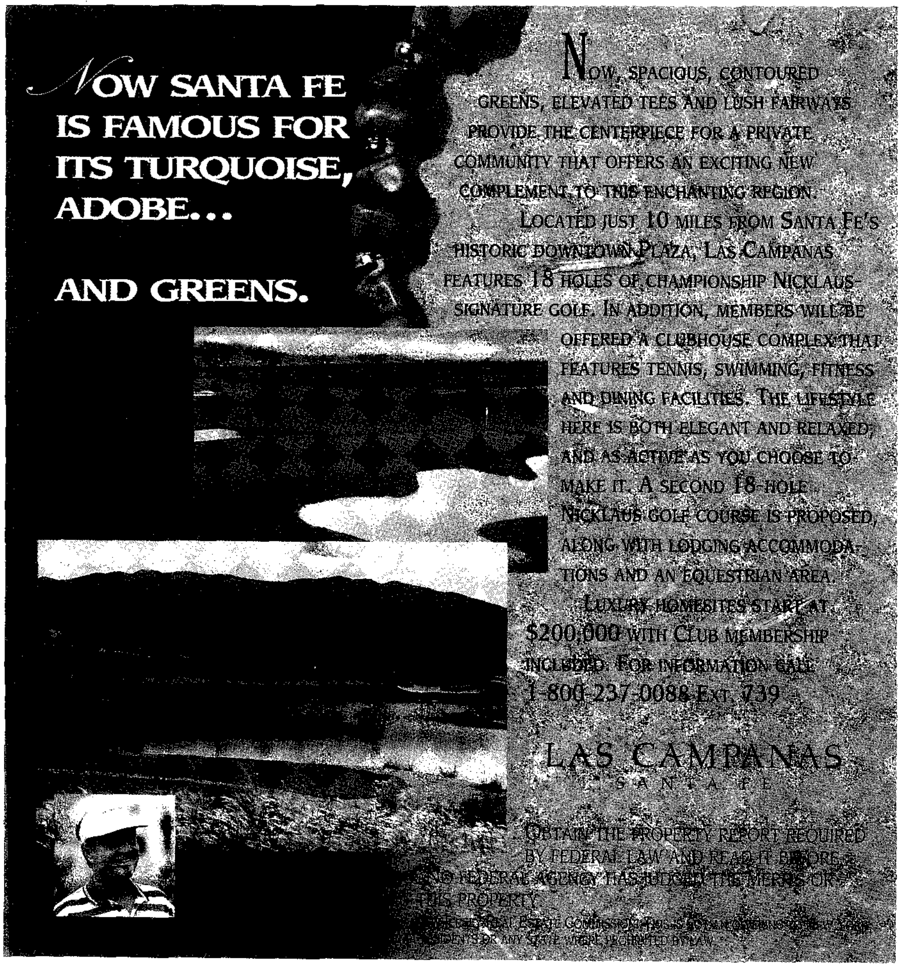

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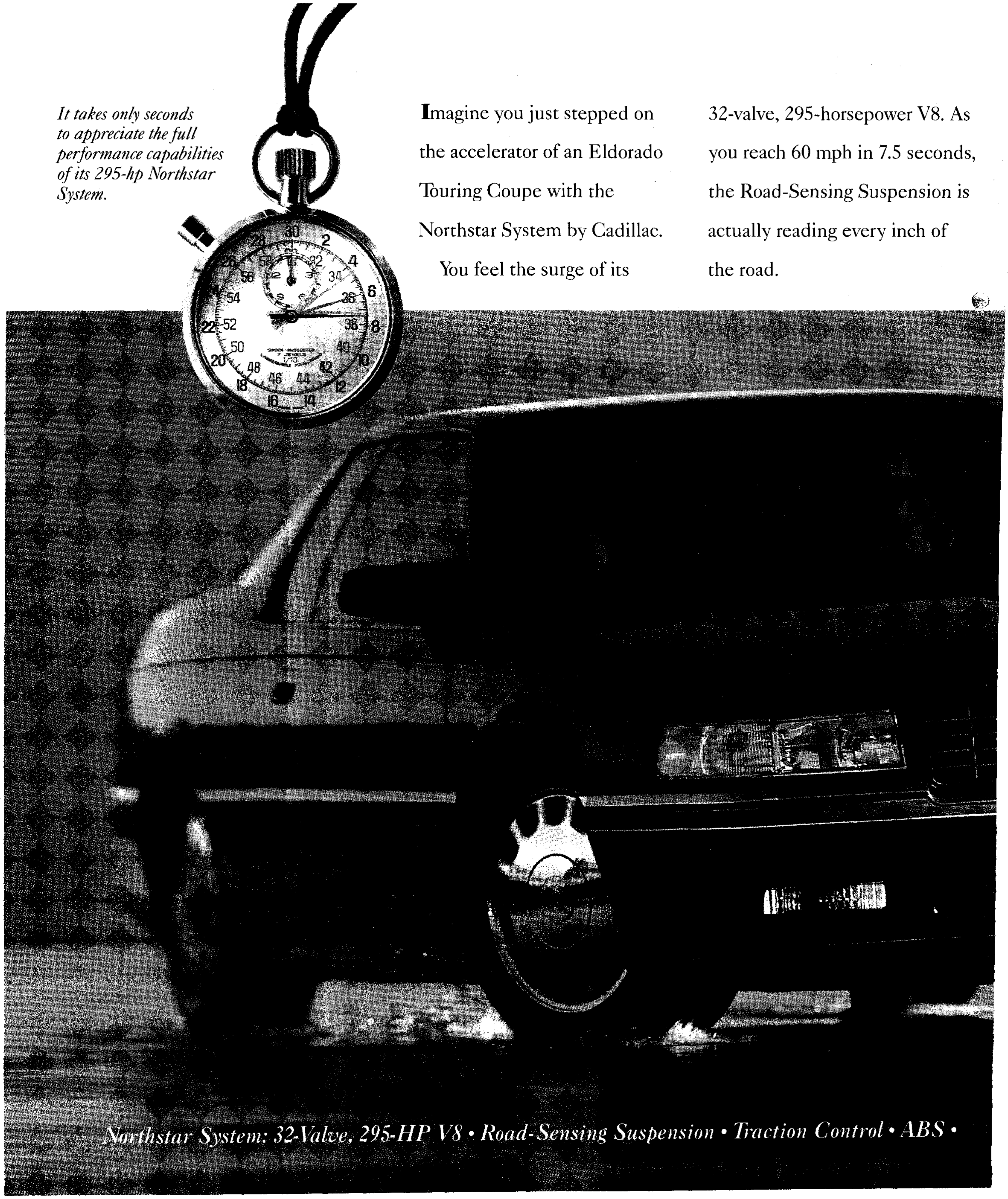
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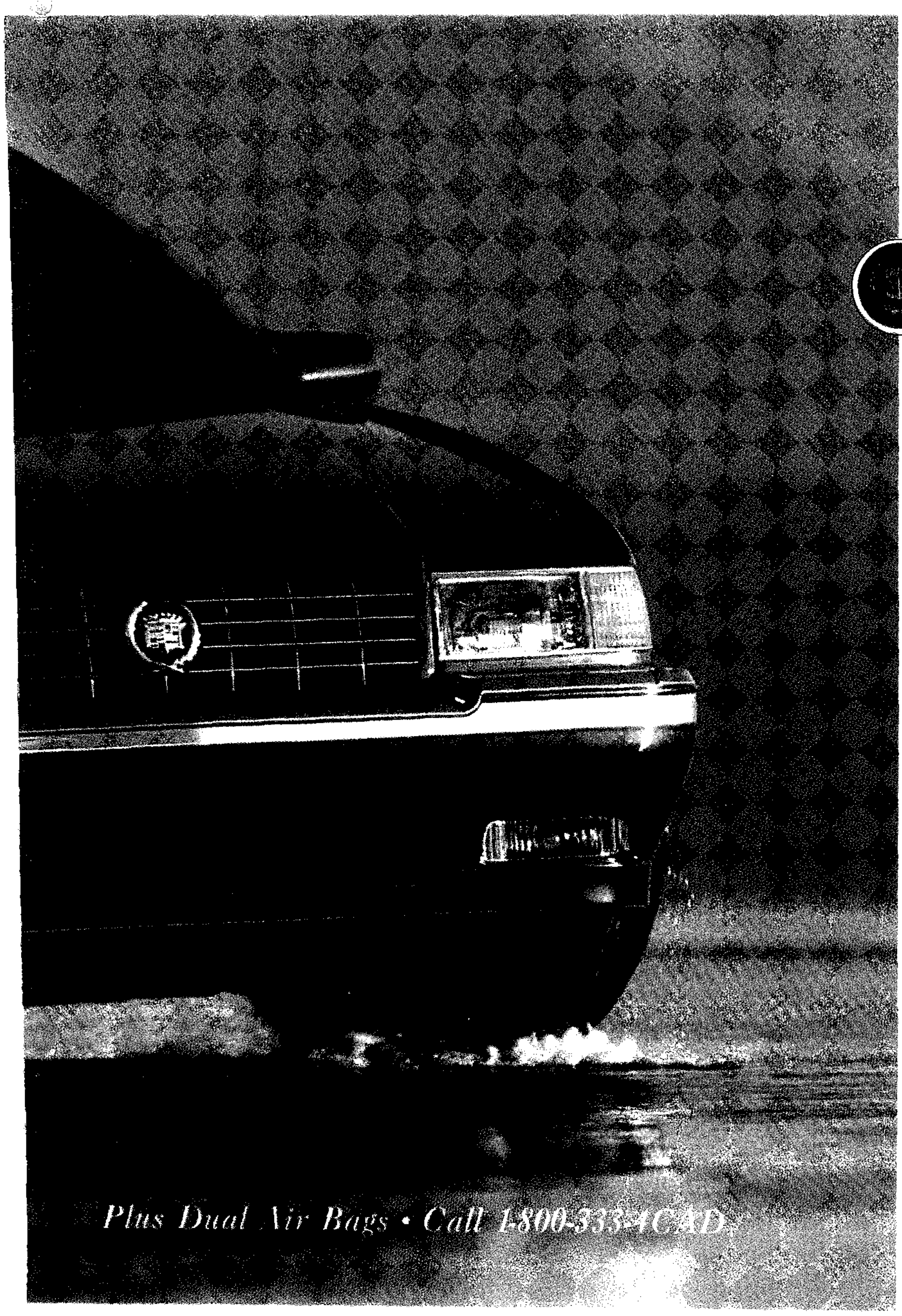

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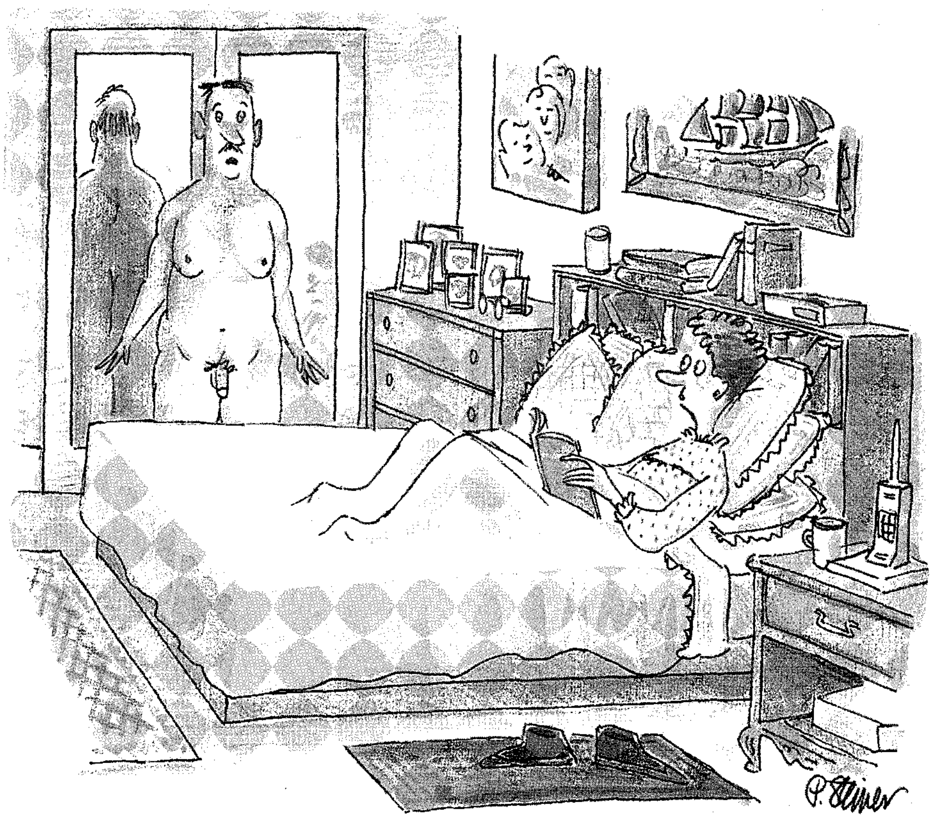

"You liked it in 'The Piano.'"

• •

would bury her in these pits. The story has a wonderful red herring in it. It's a really hard-hitting, fun cop story."

"Great. And when could you do it?"

"Right now."

"I'll read it right away."

After Bernhard left, Calley told me, "I'm not a very good executive. What I am is a great assistant. I tend to make executive decisions and then, because I'm not good at delegating, I carry them out myself. I try to do all the pictures as though I were a producer. It's crazy, and it's hard to do, but it's the way I'm most comfortable doing things." He said that "Tong" was probably a long shot but the script was worth reading. He gave it to one of his two assistants to read that afternoon, and said that he would take it home that night. I had already heard him promise to read two other scripts that night, including one by the novelist Don DeLillo. I asked him if he was really going to read them all. "Yes, I am," he said. "I've always done my job by reading, and I don't think there's any other way to do it well. When I make a decision about a movie, I want to know what I'm making a decision about. That's not true everywhere. If you are running one of the big companies, you may be the only person who can pull the trigger, but you don't have time to read what you're pulling the trigger about, because you're opening theme parks, or department stores to sell T-shirts and jackets and memorabilia. You're running a movie company, but you're not really in the movie business anymore, because you're planning a ride instead."

SANDY LEAN comes from a Swiss-English family that owned hotels in India and elsewhere. Growing up, she attended an American missionary school in the Himalayas. When she was twenty, David Lean, who was in his late fifties, happened to stay in a hotel her family owned in Agra. Sandy showed him to his room, and he was smitten. They ran off together on her twenty-first birthday, over the objections of her parents. "David Lean was immensely attractive," Calley told me one day. "He was what Cary Grant wanted to be. Very charming. And also gifted as a filmmaker—the best of that sort of creature. He was also a very close friend of mine, and Sandy was as well." The Leans lived mostly in hotels in colorful spots around the world. When the marriage broke up, in the mid-eighties, Sandy began calling Calley for comfort and advice. Calley was living on Fishers Island then, and he invited her to come and visit. They have been together ever since.

Sandy is about fifteen years younger than Calley. She is lovely and elegant and sophisticated in a way that would scare me to death if I hadn't had dinner with her and John one night at the Bel-Air and felt her kick me under the table when Dolly Parton sat down a few feet to my left.

I asked Cornwell—my mentor in all matters concerning Calley's inner life—to describe their relationship. "Sandy is simply the other half of John," he said. Another friend said, "Sandy and John seem like kids who escaped from the orphanage. When they're together, you have a sense, almost, that they are in flight from grownups." Both have led astonishingly peripatetic lives. The house in Connecticut is in some ways the first conventional home that either of them has had.

Characteristically, I guess, they're not living in it at the moment. Putting down roots must be hard if you've never had them. Still, for Calley, at least, Hollywood must also seem like home, though in a different way. It was the entertainment business that enabled him, in his mid-twenties, to break out of what until that point had been a pretty brutish life. I think back to something he said to me shortly after we first talked. He had been telling me about the early years of his career, and he said, "There was an amazing moment back when I was at NBC. I had just got out of the clerical world that I went to after the mailroom, and I was at a meeting in a boardroom with a sort of mythic creature in the company—a guy who was viewed as a genius in the field. He was talking about programming problems. I was a twenty-four- or twenty-five-year-old kid, and I was listening to him mumble along, and I suddenly thought, This is a myth? I know much more about this than he does. I don't want this to sound as pompous as it must, but I just suddenly felt that somehow I had been chosen, that everything was going to be fine. I don't mean chosen to run a movie company. I wasn't thinking, I'll get him, or I can stab this bastard in the back. I just felt, Jesus, I can do this. If this is all it takes, then I'm going to be O.K." ♦

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REFLECTIONS

DIN! DIN! DIN!

Some husbands may forsake the films of their boyhood, but the author will defend "Gunga Din" as long as the ammunition holds out.

BY CALVIN TRILLIN

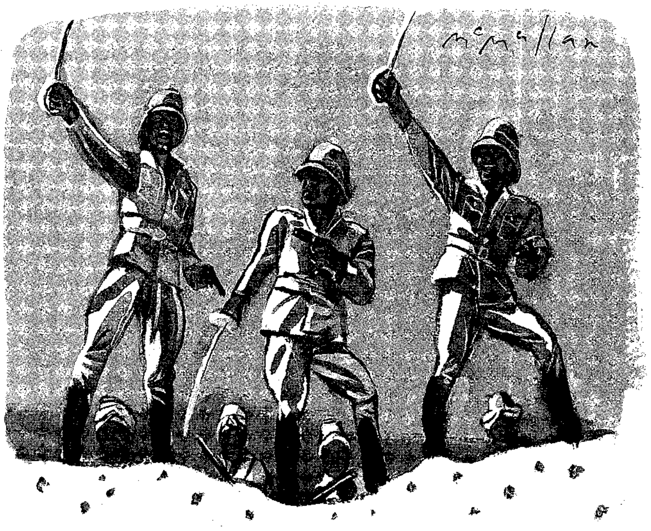
A DEVOTION to "Gunga Din" is an awkward thing to bring to a marriage. This has been particularly true since some Americans began to take movies seriously—I put the date of that sometime in the spring of 1956—and your favorite movie became less like your favorite ice-cream flavor than like a test of your character. When my wife and I got married, in 1965, I wouldn't have been surprised to hear that her friends were speculating about how long she'd be able to remain in a union with somebody who was filmically stunted.

"Wait until she wants to see 'Un Chien Andalou' and 'Gunga Din' is in the neighborhood," I could imagine one of them saying to another. "That's when the bloom will be off the rose."

"The man's a thug," her companion would say, "pure and simple."

My father brought me up to believe that "Gunga Din" was the greatest movie ever made, in the way some fathers brought up their sons to seek revenge for the Battle of the Boyne. Over the years, my views have diverged from my father's in most cultural matters, but on the matter of "Gunga Din" I have never strayed. I remain enthralled by the roistering sergeants, Cary Grant and Victor McLaglen and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. I laugh out loud every time I see my father's favorite scene: During a brawl, Cary Grant is about to slug a man he is holding halfway out a second-story window. A non-roistering sergeant on the street shouts up, "Take your hands off that man!" Grant, obeying orders for once, removes his hands and lets the man fall to the street below.

It seemed natural that shortly after my wife and I met I insisted that she watch "Gunga Din" with me. It wasn't a test. It wasn't as if I planned to give her a quiz at the end, like the football quiz in "Diner." By chance, "Gunga Din" was showing on late-night TV, and I was sure she'd enjoy it. I'll admit that I harbored some fantasies about how we'd watch "Gunga Din" together in the years to come—laughing at Cary Grant's mugging and McLaglen's sputtering, sharing a shudder at the creepy leader of the murder cult.



Victor McLaglen, Cary Grant, and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., in what is rumored to be the greatest movie ever made.

JAMES MCMULLAN

My wife didn't seem terribly impressed by "Gunga Din." She said that she didn't understand what distinguished it from "Four Feathers" and "The Lost Patrol" and other examples of a genre she referred to as "sand movies."

I thought about explaining how "Gunga Din" didn't have anything to do with movies like "The Lost Patrol," and not just because it takes place in India, where there's no sand to speak of. But somehow I knew it wouldn't do any good. She would never see "Gunga Din" the way my father did. If we got married, it would be a marriage that did not provide me with a "Gunga Din" companion. My father had told me that "Gunga Din" was the greatest movie ever made, but he'd also told me that someday I'd probably meet a girl I'd be willing to give something up for.

My father, of course, was speaking before differences in movie tastes could be papered over with videocassettes. I now have my own tape of "Gunga Din." The other day, I was watching it when my wife, who was in another room, heard me laugh out loud. It may well have been at the moment Cary Grant was obeying the non-roistering sergeant.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Watching 'Gunga Din,' " I said.

"Is it supposed to be funny?"

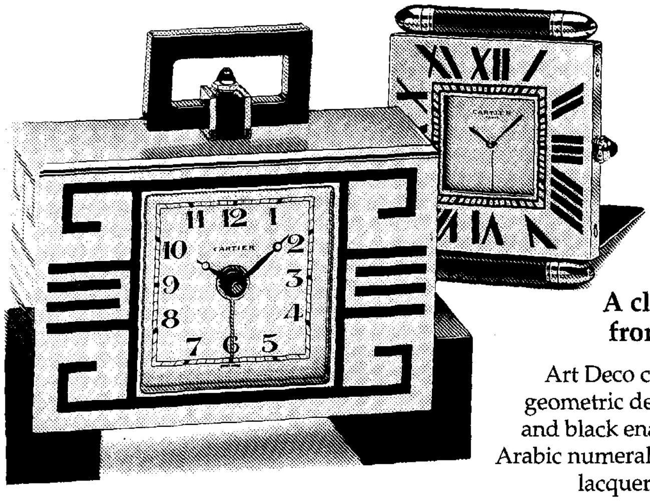
Just for a moment, I thought about telling her that "Gunga Din" was usually a lot better than it had been that night she saw it many years ago. I remember that print as looking jumpy and dark and—yes, I'll admit it—sandy. Also, the commercials came at awkward moments—for instance, right in the middle of the hilarious scene in which Cary Grant, hoping to stage a diversion so that Gunga Din can slip away to alert the regiment, emerges from where the two of them had been hiding, strolls down the center aisle of the murder-cult temple singing, "All the roast beef from England and all the old English roast beef," and then announces to the horde of murder-cultists surrounding him, "Now you're all under arrest." I thought about telling her that any movie can have an off night.

But I didn't think she had really built up sympathy over the years for the scene in which Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., whose term of enlistment is up, rejects the pleas of his fiancée in order to join Victor McLaglen in a two-man attempt to rescue Cary Grant from thousands of murder-cultists—leaving Joan Fontaine to say, in a moment that blends exasperation with insight, "You'd rather be with him."

It's not as if my wife has ever hinted that my devotion to "Gunga Din" reveals me to be a thug. She treats it the way she treats my lingering fondness for certain leftovers that my mother served me when I was a boy. You might say that I have a "Gunga Din" easement. All in all, things have worked out.

"Yes, some of it is funny," I finally said. "But I don't actually think you'd like it." ♦

Cartier



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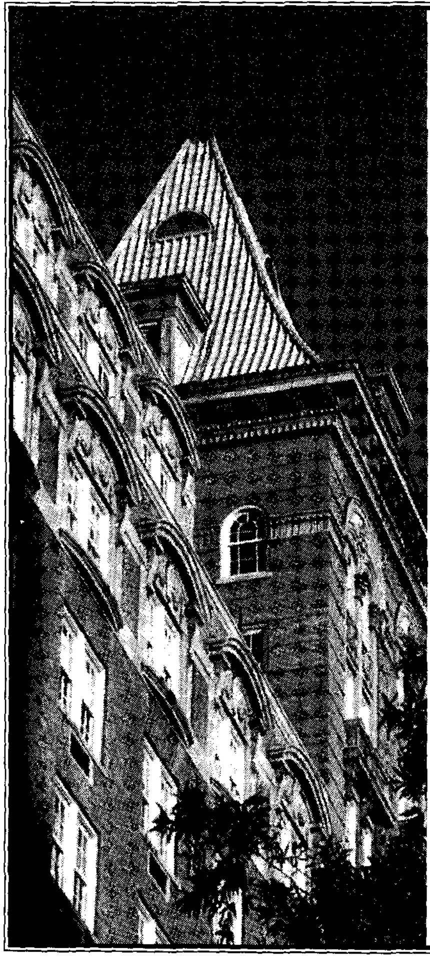

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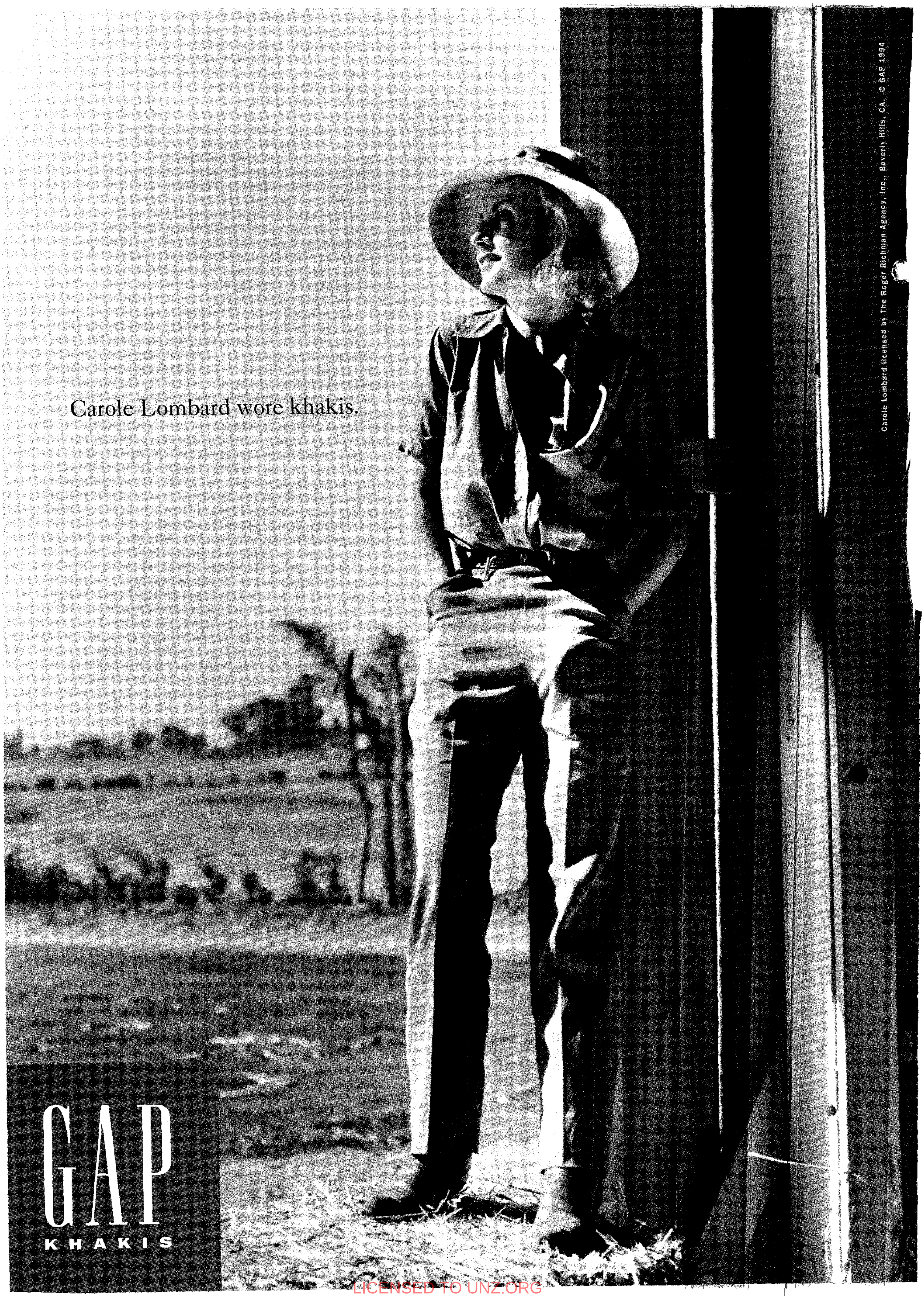
Carole Lombard wore khakis.
GAP
KHAKIS

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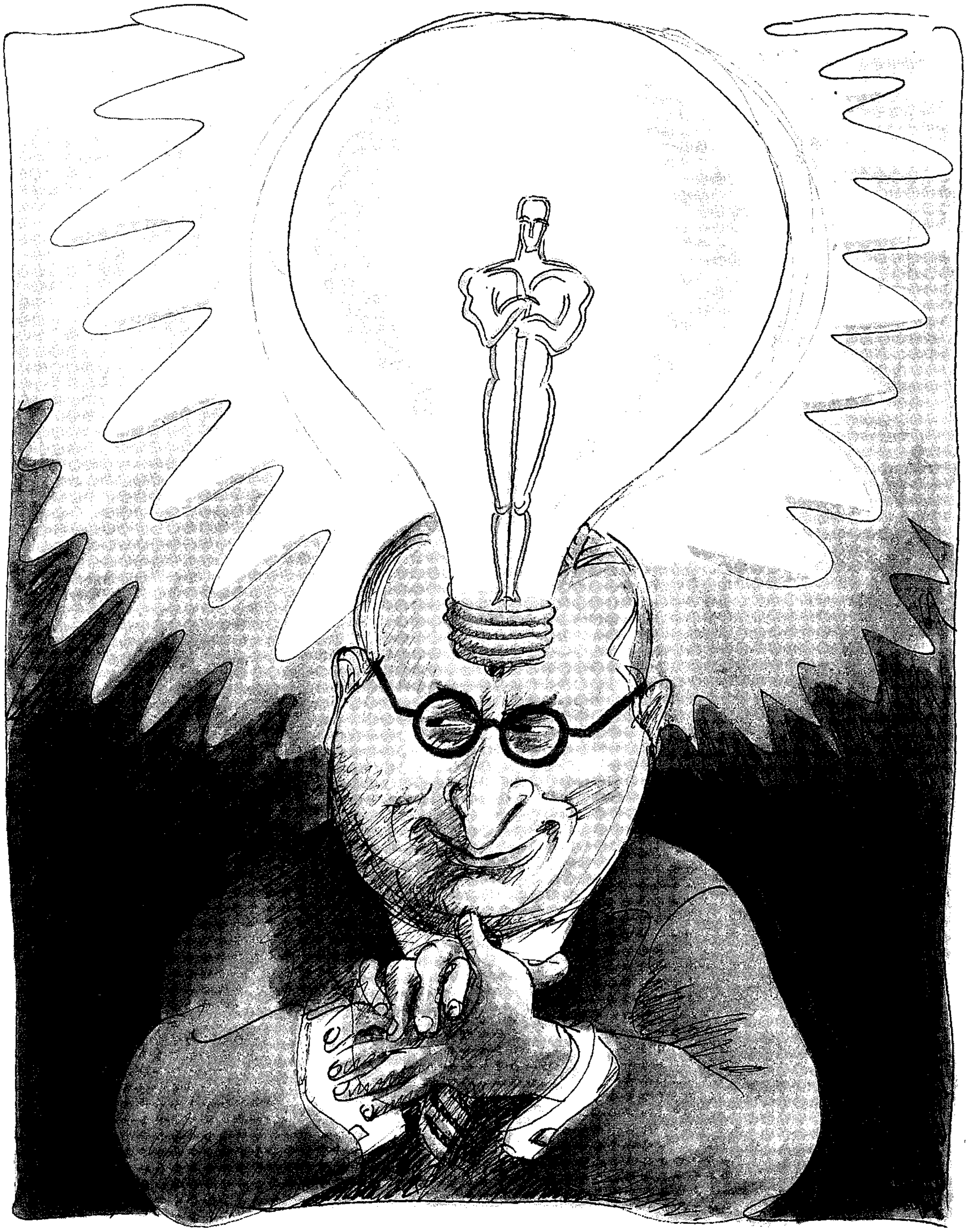
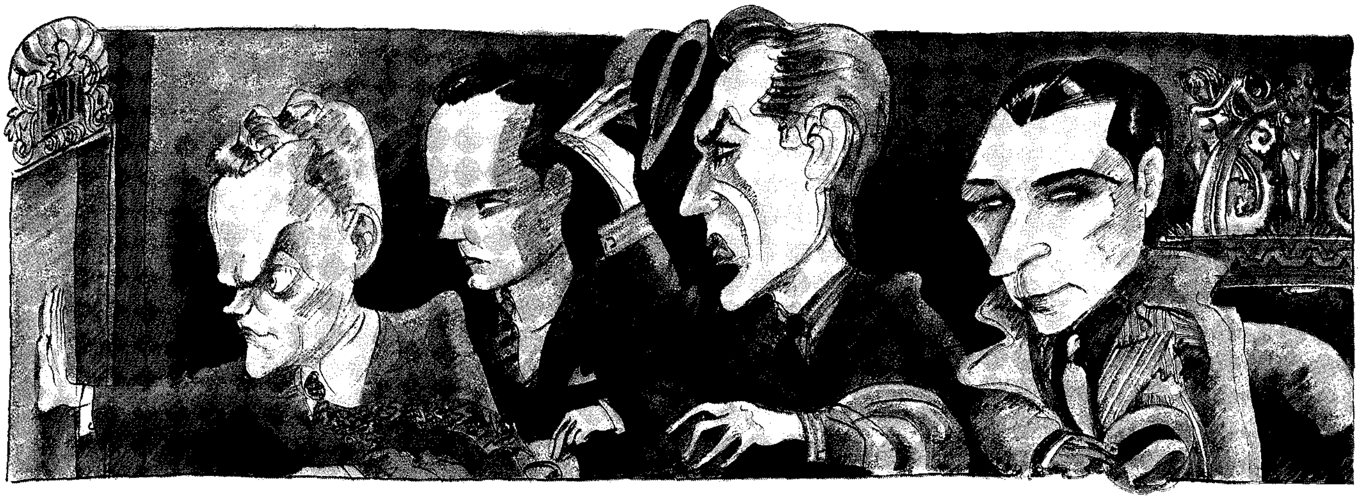
ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY EDWARD SOREL

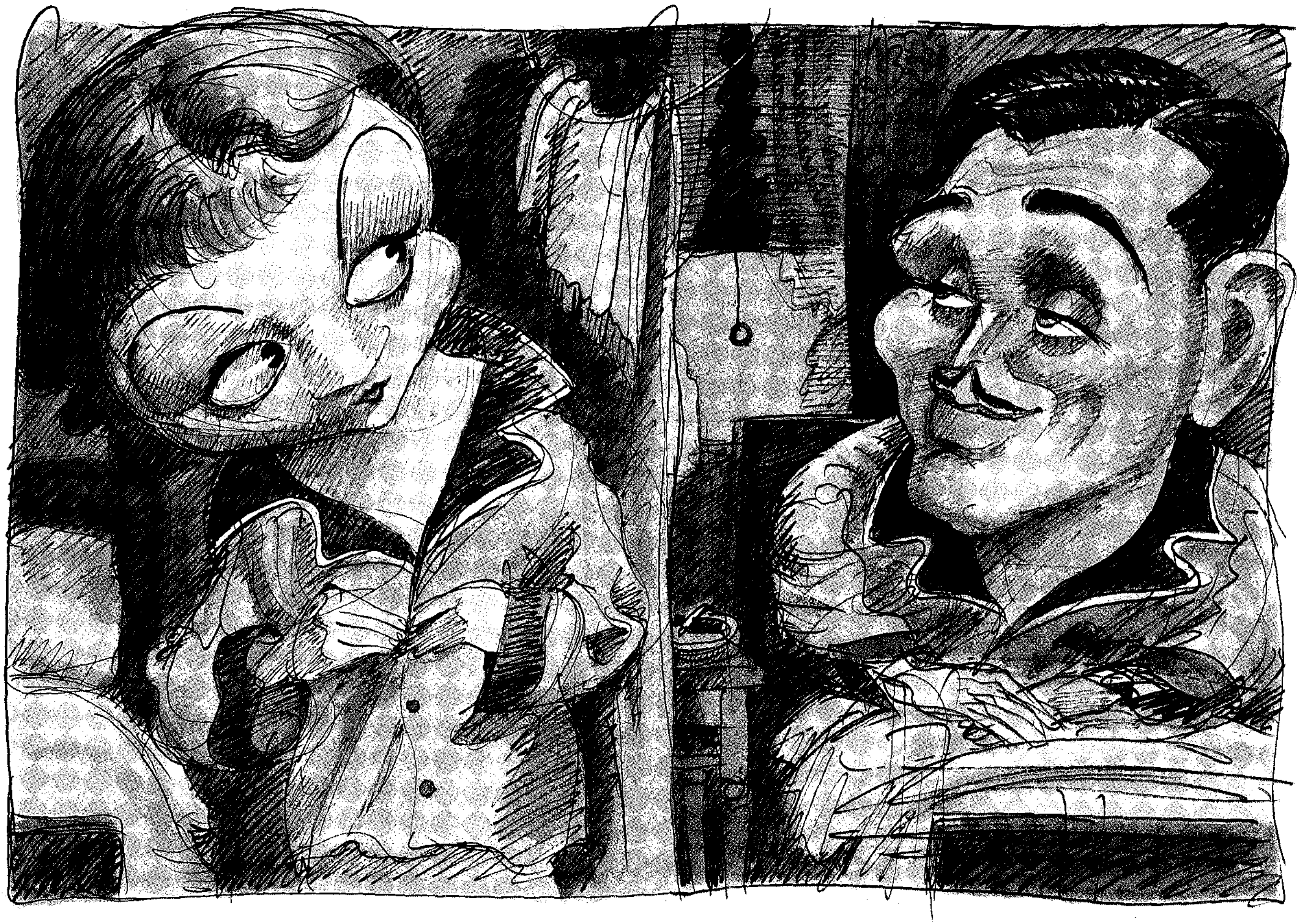
THE BIRTH OF OSCAR

In 1927, Louis B. Mayer conceived of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a public-relations stunt and as a way to block the power of the unions. But young Oscar quickly assumed a life of his own.



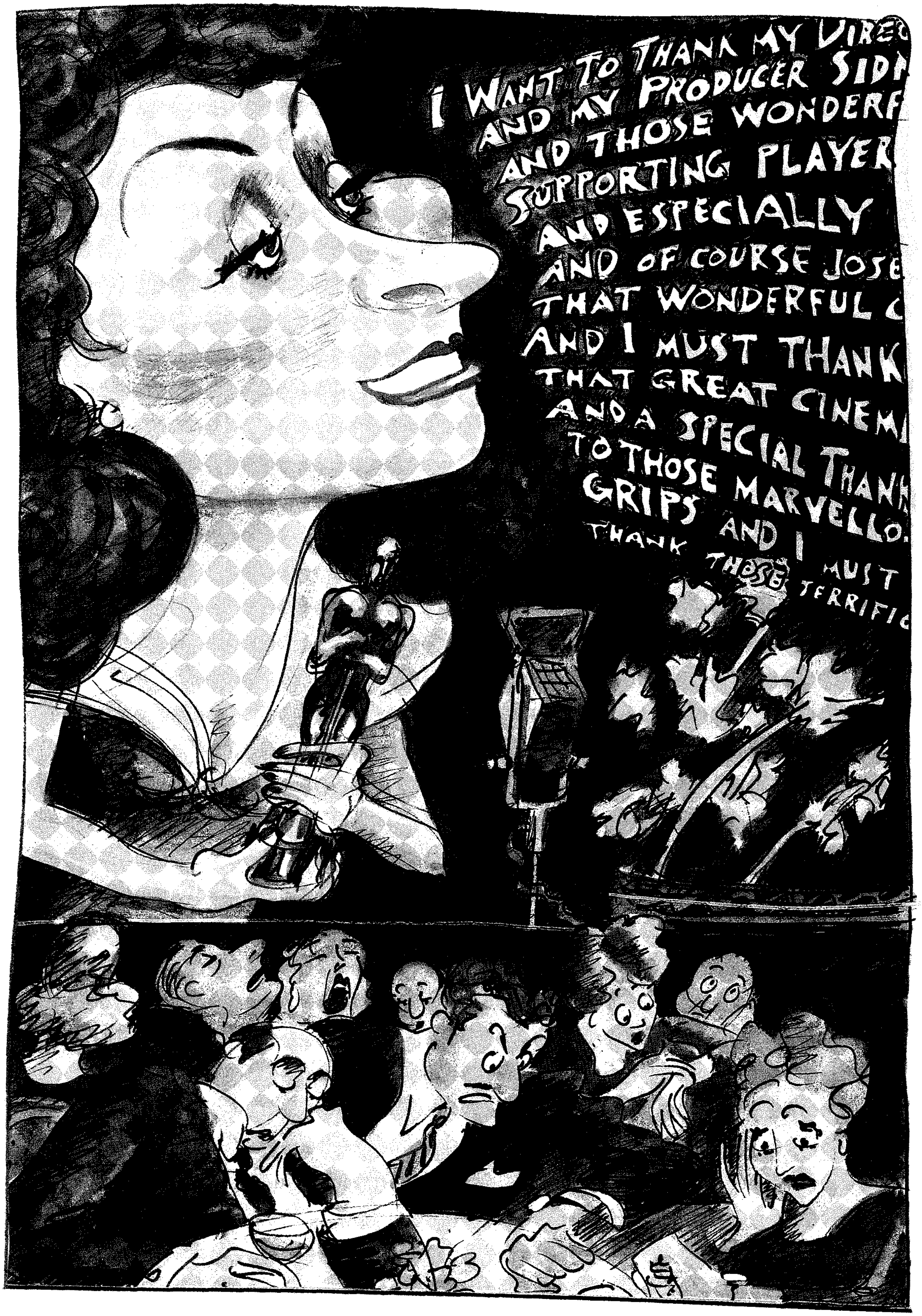


Above: In 1933, Cagney, March, Cooper, and Raft bolted for the Screen Actors Guild. Below: Two years later, surviving Academy members crowned Colbert and Gable. Right: Greer Garson's 1943 speech—similar to the one pictured here—was long remembered.



THAT bundle of joy later nicknamed Oscar weighed nearly seven pounds and measured a strapping eleven inches when he made the acquaintance of the waiting world, on May 16, 1929, with the proud progenitor of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Louis B. Mayer, looking on. Mayer, who had taken over as head of production at M-G-M in 1924, was present at the conception of most things in Hollywood. In fact, Oscar was an afterthought; Mayer had his mind on business. Moviemakers were under serious public attack for licentiousness both onscreen and off. "Flotsam and jetsam . . . Hollywood gets 'em," quipped a poet. The formation of the Academy was announced on January 11, 1927, only two months after Hollywood's nine major studios signed the Studio Basic Agreement with the five technical labor unions. The Academy was Mayer's ploy to unite the high rollers of the industry's five branches—actors, directors, writers, technicians, and producers—and at the same time raise the respectability of the movies and lessen the increasing power of the unions. The statuette for which performers would traditionally break their neck was part of his larger plan to break the back of labor.

The Academy was soon hoist on its



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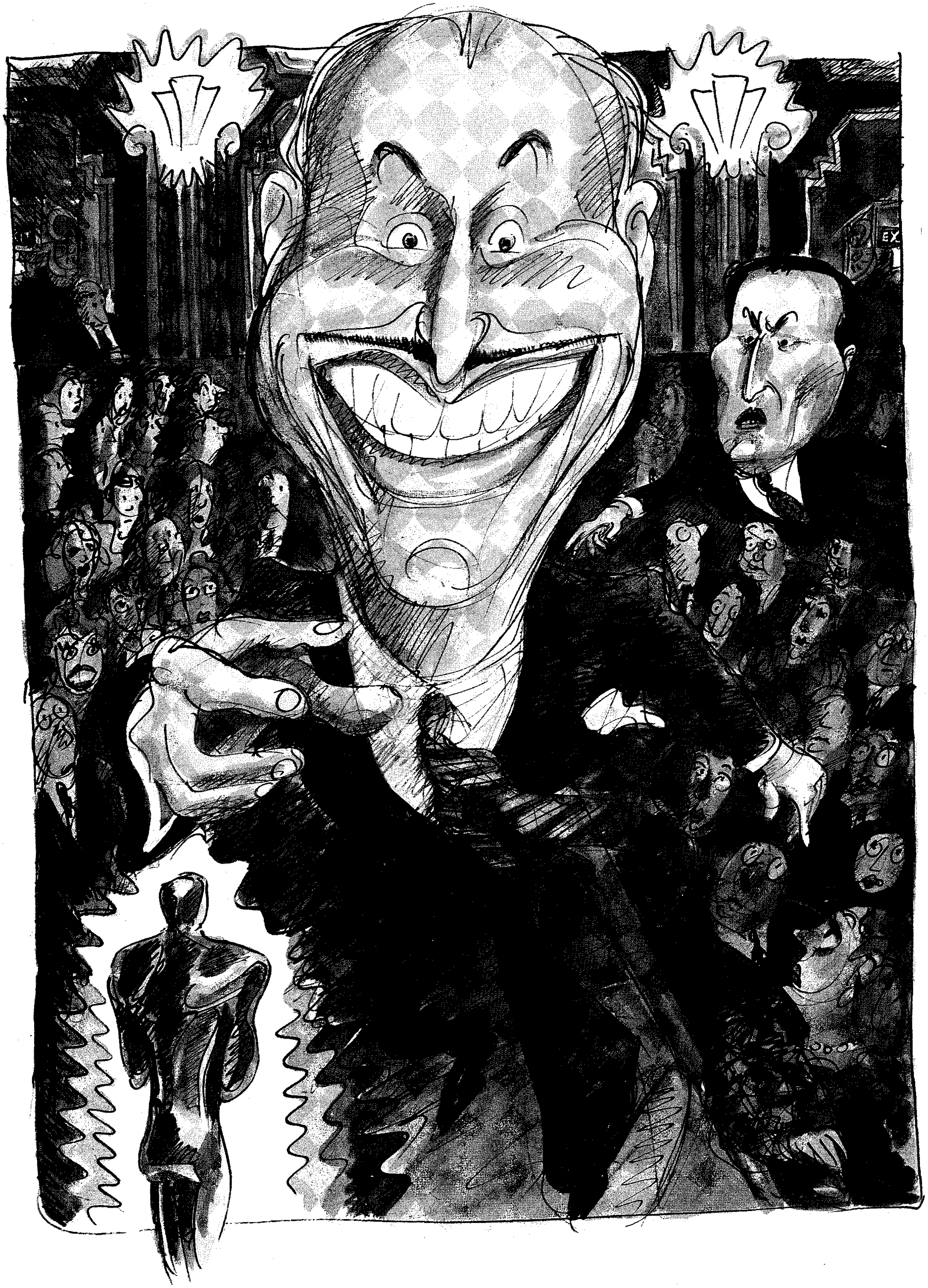
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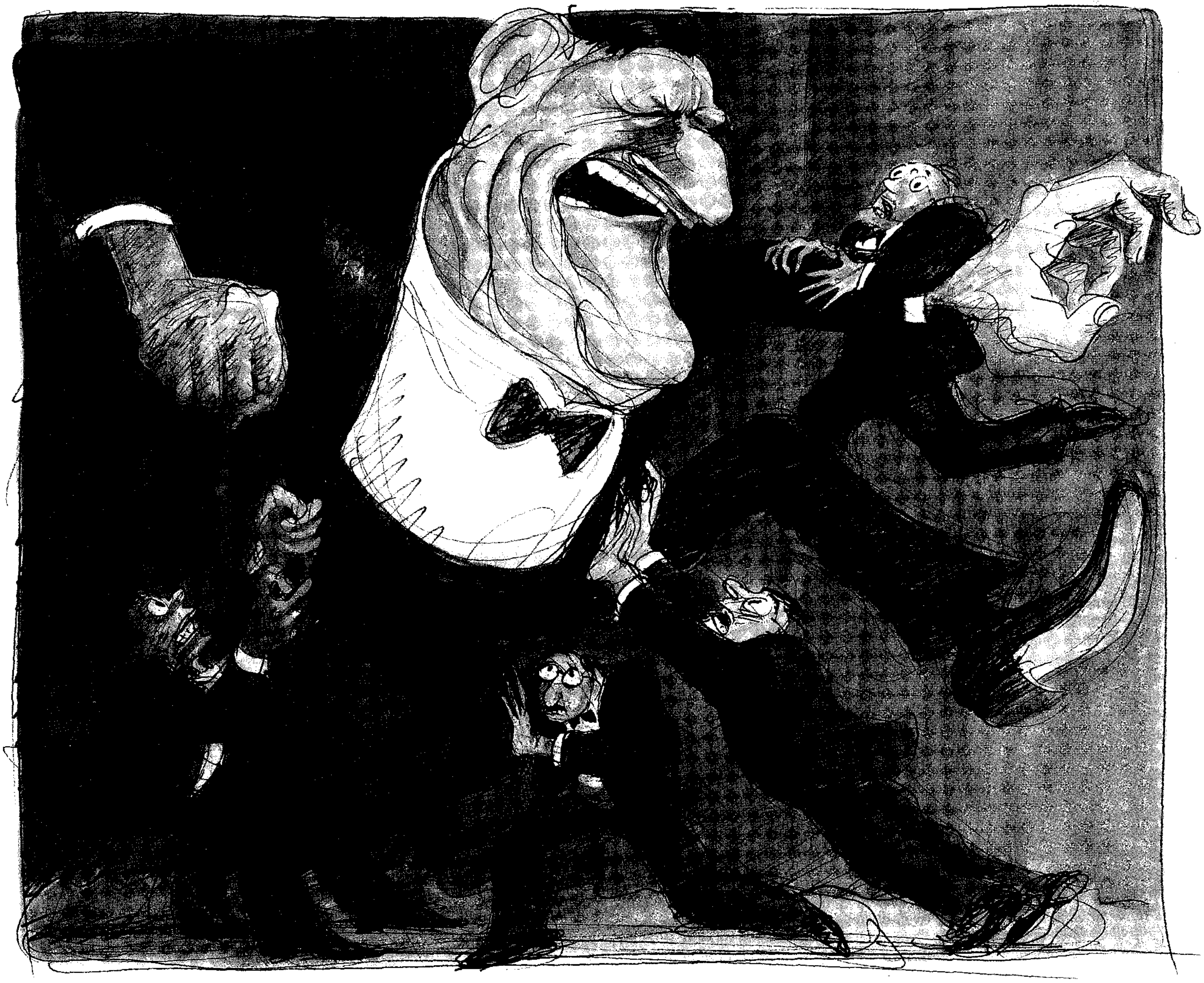

Left: In 1944, Jack Warner hijacked Hal Wallis's Oscar. Above: Three decades later, cowboy John Wayne went gunning for Brando's scout Sacheen Littlefeather.

own P.R. In 1933, more than a thousand actors (James Cagney, Fredric March, Gary Cooper, and George Raft among them), angered by the Motion Picture Code Committee, left to join the Screen Actors Guild, whose members were encouraged to resign from the Academy. The acrimonious dispute lasted several years. So vast were the defections that only ninety-five actors remained in the Academy to vote for the 1934 Academy Awards. The nominations included Claudette Colbert as Best Actress for "It Happened One Night" but overlooked Bette Davis for her performance in "Of Human Bondage." The Academy was forced to change its voting rules to allow write-in ballots, but the prize nevertheless went to Colbert (with Best Actor to her co-star, Clark Gable).

In 1936, the Guild and the Academy reached agreement. The actors soon embraced the Oscars as eagerly as the world did. Greer Garson, who won Best Actress for "Mrs. Miniver" (1942), gabbed for so long in her acceptance speech that several days later *The Hollywood Reporter* suggested that the Academy rename itself "The Motion Picture Political Party of Pull and Palaver." Speech limits have been proposed periodically ever since. But no limits have been proposed for eager moguls like Jack Warner, who in 1944 sprinted ahead of the producer Hal Wallis to collect the Best Picture award for "Casablanca," which was made by Warner Bros. "Almost forty years later, I still haven't recovered from the shock," Wallis wrote.

The shock of winning and losing—the iconic drama of the American sweepstakes which the Academy Awards annually act out—was nothing compared to the backstage shock suffered by John Wayne in 1973, when he heard a woman who called herself Sacheen Littlefeather, of the Apache tribe, explain why Marlon Brando could not accept the Best Actor award for "The Godfather." The Duke, who had dispatched many an Apache on film, didn't take kindly to Brando's protest against Hollywood's depiction of Native Americans. Wayne had to be restrained by six men from yanking Littlefeather off the stage. The Academy Awards ceremony, after all, is one American show that must go on, and on.

—JOHN LAHR

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BEHIND THE CAMERA

SERIOUSLY SPIELBERG

With "Schindler's List," Steven Spielberg shattered his own image—an image he admits he helped create—as a P. T. Barnum of American movies. How could he have made "Jurassic Park" and "Schindler's List" in the same year? And where will he go from here? The industry and Spielberg himself are waiting to find out.

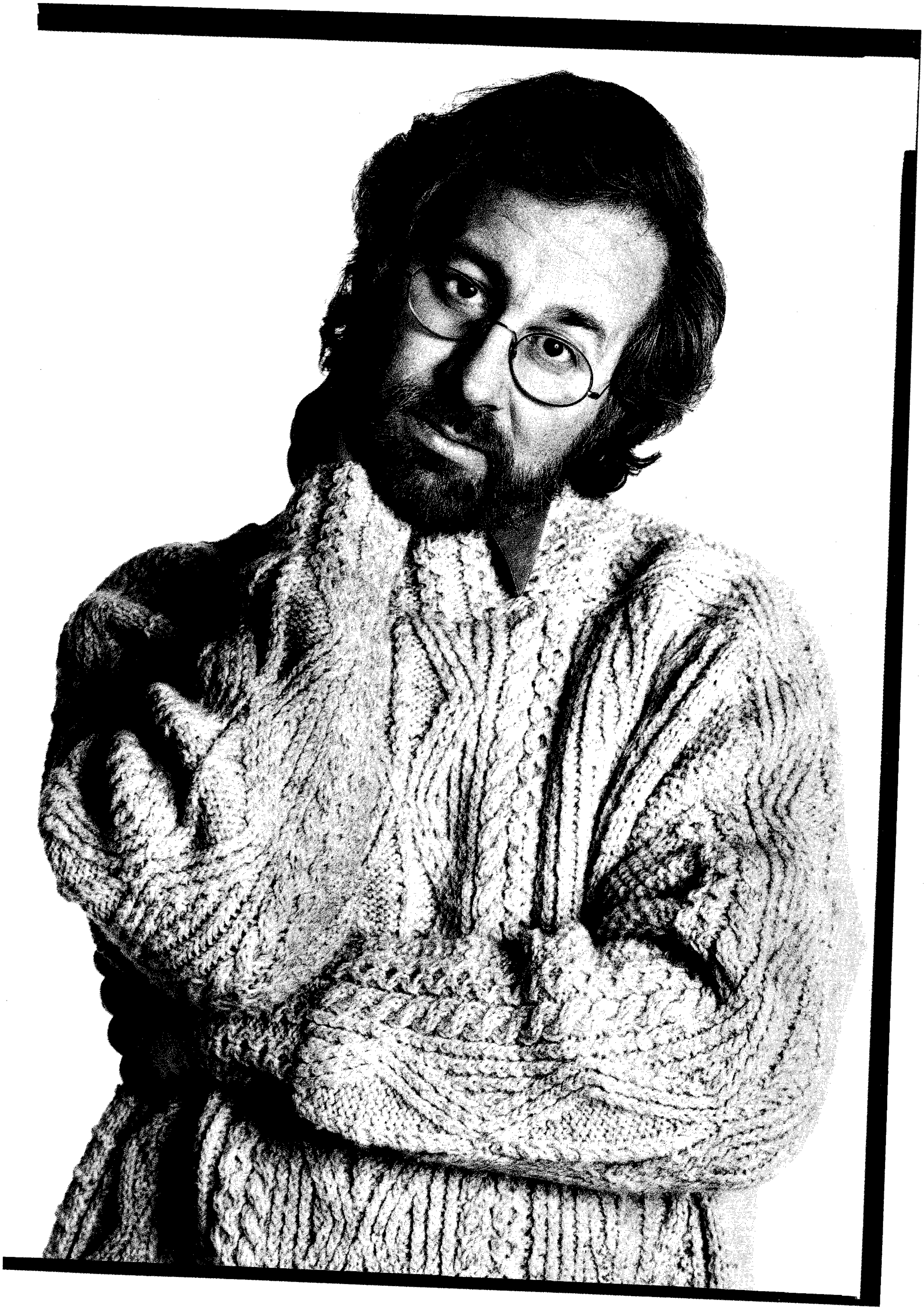
BY STEPHEN SCHIFF

AT the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas a couple of months ago, Steven Spielberg looked like someone who hadn't grown into his big brother's clothes. His jeans were baggy, and so was his salmon-colored sweatshirt; he wore a baseball cap that said "Brown University" on it (because his seventeen-year-old stepdaughter, Jessica, had just been admitted there), and the gray streaks in his beard might have struck one as improbable. He was being squired about by Lew Wasserman, the dapper chairman of MCA, and Sidney Sheinberg, the company's president. And around them blinked several lesser lights, mostly officials of Panasonic, which, like MCA, is owned by the giant Japanese conglomerate Matsushita. The caverns of the Las Vegas Convention Center were filled with squawking video games, stereos, wide-screen televisions, and scary-looking motion simulators, and Spielberg strode among them all with his hands clasped behind his back, like General Patton. For him, this was conquered territory: everywhere one looked, there were variations on themes from his movies "Jurassic Park," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "E.T.," "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," even "Jaws." As he strolled, techies goggled at him, snapped pictures, aimed camcorders, and thrust little control panels and joysticks into his hands: "Play this one, Steven!" "Steven, you'll love this. It'd make a great movie!" Wasserman and Sheinberg, two of the most powerful men in Hollywood, hung behind like courtiers, attending to his needs and directing his gaze to whatever shiny gewgaw might amuse him, and every so often Spielberg would throw out a question about something juicy like ROM capacity or interactions per minute, and new minions would appear at his side with answers. As he played with a video game that traced the berserk journey of a runaway truck on a sere and distant planet, I overheard a pimply young techie murmur, "Look, it's God." His companion craned his neck, caught sight of Spielberg. "Hey, you're right," he said. "God."

There are limits to the dominion of a techie god. But when you turn on the television or go to the movies, when you play a video game or enter an amusement park or a shopping mall, there it all is: the Spielberg vision, imitated, replicated, and recycled—the upturned faces awaiting miracles, the otherworldly white backlighting, the here-comes-the-shark music, the mischievous but golden-hearted suburban children, the toys that fidget and romp by themselves, the Indiana Jones jungles and deserts and hats. That Spielberg is the most commercially successful movie director in history, with four of the top ten all-time box-office hits, is widely recognized; less so is the enormous influence that his vision has had on all the other visions the entertainment industry purveys. For better or worse, Spielberg's graphic vocabulary has engulfed our own. When car manufacturers want to seduce us, when moviemakers want to scare us, when political candidates want to persuade us, the visual language they employ is often Spielbergese—one of the few languages that this intensely fragmented society holds in common. We all respond to the image of "a place

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AVEDON

Steven Spielberg, Los Angeles, February 11, 1994.



called Hope" when it's lit like a Spielberg idyll; we understand what we're being told about a soda can when it arrives in a Spielberg spaceship; we get the joke when an approaching basketball star shakes the earth like a Spielberg dinosaur. The way Steven Spielberg sees the world has become the way the world is communicated back to us every day.

Still, prophets are without honor in their own country, and in Hollywood, a town famous for its vindictiveness and Schadenfreude, the supernal glow around Steven Spielberg had, by the beginning of last year, begun to fade. The word was that industry people hated him for his wealth, his sharp business practices, his happy-go-lucky-kid demeanor. The memory of the dreamlike "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," which had become the most successful film in history, was a decade old, and Spielberg had slipped up several times since that movie's release: with "The Color Purple," his unconvincing first foray into the world of grownup cinema; with "Empire of the Sun" and the wildly overblown "Always," a pair of flops also aimed at adults; with "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," which some thought too sadistic to be any fun; with "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," which some thought too tepid to be any fun; and finally with "Hook," his lumbering Peter Pan saga, which cost more than any other movie he had ever made, and which practically no one much liked—including Spielberg. Throughout the eighties, Spielberg's films often seemed like imitation Spielberg films, only preachier. Even in the summer of 1993, after the release of the dinosaur picture "Jurassic Park," which swiftly replaced "E.T." as the largest-grossing film in history, Spielberg could still be shrugged off by his less charitable contemporaries much the way that they had always shrugged him off: as a kind of adolescent savant doomed to accomplish nothing beyond Spielberg movies—in other words, boys'-book fantasies, light shows, theme-park rides. You could be smug about a filmmaker like that, even if he was richer and more powerful and more famous than you, because the gap between his technological gifts and his artistic maturity seemed almost comical; his limitations were clear.

But that was before the release of his masterpiece about the Holocaust, "Schindler's List," a work of restraint, intelligence, and unusual sensitivity, and the finest fiction feature ever made about the century's greatest evil. Adapted from Thomas Keneally's superb book about Oskar Schindler, a Nazi businessman who began by employing Jews in his Kraków factory and wound up saving eleven hundred of them from the death camps, "Schindler's List" is the sort of film that fashions of taste and politics won't soon dislodge; it will take its place in cultural history and remain there. And for Spielberg it has had the effect of a giant bar mitzvah, a rite of passage. Prince Hal has become Henry V; the dauphin has emerged a king.

"I had to grow into that," Spielberg told me recently. "It took me years before I was really ready to make 'Schindler's List.' I had a lot of projects on my shelves that were of a political nature and had 'social deed' written all over them—even had 'politically correct' stamped on top of them. And I didn't make those films, because I was censoring that part of me by saying to myself, 'That's not what the public will accept from you. What they will accept from you is thrills, chills, spills, and awe and wonder and that sort of thing.' I was afraid people would say, as some of them did say about both 'Empire of the Sun' and 'The Color Purple,' you know, 'Oh, it's the wrong shoe size. And it's the wrong style. What's he doing? Who does he wanna be like? Who's he trying to become—Woody? Or is he trying to become David Lean? Is he trying to become Marty Scorsese? Who does he think he is?' And I listened to that criticism. It gets to you. I certainly felt that everybody had sent me the message loud and clear that I was, you know, bad casting. I was a kid for life. And I almost slept in the bed they made—no, I made the bed for myself. But when I wanted to wake up and do something different many people tried to get me to go back to bed. 'Go to your room. And don't come out until it's something my kids will love, young man.' "

Yet, paradoxically, Spielberg's coming of age has been celebrated nowhere more ardently than in Hollywood—cynical, envious Hollywood, the community that has for so long denied the neighborhood rich kid its highest accolade, the Academy Award.

Anyone who has spent any time there lately will have noticed that it has become voguish for the movie industry's prominent players to display a disdainful indifference to the films they make. The formulation that runs, "It's only a movie; it's not a cure for cancer," has been popular, even when the movie in question was budgeted at a cost precisely suitable to a cure for cancer. So the mood was right for "Schindler's List," which not only was a very great film, but seemed itself to be a kind of worthy cause. Still, there have been worthy-cause films before, and the impact of "Schindler's List" has outstripped nearly all of them, because, to so many people in the movie business, it seems an inexplicable phenomenon. Hollywood understands talent, but it is baffled by genius; it understands appearances, but it is baffled by substance. Spielberg's genius is all the more bewildering because he gives very little outward sign of having any. In a town obsessed with surfaces, Spielberg wears goofy clothes, collects goofy art (he has twenty-five Norman Rockwell paintings), makes wide-eyed, goofy conversation, and maintains a personal style that is unpretentious to a fault. It has been almost preposterous that this awkward prodigy—not a child of Holocaust survivors, not previously steeped in the literature, not even terribly Jewish—has turned his famously gaudy light on this darkest and most difficult of subjects and come back with a masterpiece. In the end, Hollywood couldn't dismiss it, couldn't resent it, could barely even digest it. Instead, people there fell back in flabbergasted awe, sputtering wildly, the way they often do at fund-raisers and award ceremonies.

"I think 'Schindler's List' will wind up being so much more important than a movie," Jeffrey Katzenberg, who runs the Walt Disney film studios, told me. "It will affect how people on this planet think and act. At a moment in time, it is going to remind us about the dark side, and do it in a way in which, whenever that little green monster is lurking somewhere, this movie is going to press it down again. I don't want to burden the movie too much, but I think it will bring peace on earth, good will to men. Enough of the right people will see it that it will actually set the course of world affairs. Steven is a national treasure. I'm breakin' my neck lookin' up at this guy."

Steven Spielberg with Janusz Kaminski, the Polish-born cinematographer who directed the black-and-white photography of "Schindler's List."

Whether or not "Schindler's List" really is Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, and Dag Hammarskjöld rolled into one, a number of Spielberg's friends think that making the film has transformed him, or, rather, that it marks the latest and largest advance in a seasoning process that began around 1985, when he had his first child, Max—whose mother is his first wife, the actress Amy Irving—and has developed throughout his second marriage, to the actress Kate Capshaw. Spielberg has become more outgoing lately, more clubbable, more capable of intimacy. "I don't think Steven's had this many friends in his life since I've known him," Capshaw says. "He's got real buddies—he's never had that." These days he hangs out, often with prominent show-biz figures who more or less answer the same description: child-men, many of whom have settled down with take-charge, family-oriented, often relatively unglamorous wives, to raise children of their own—Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Tom Hanks, Robert Zemeckis, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Martin Short. Together, these grown-up kids form a benign aristocracy, very different from the one that once dominated Hollywood—not dangerous, not druggy, not sexy, not wild. Their boyhoods are etched in their faces. These aren't the guys who passed their youths rat-packing around the neighborhood and getting into mischief; these were the wimpy guys, the nerds who spent their days in the vicinity of Mom, alone in the sandbox or playing in their room, developing the inner world that would one day conquer the outer one.

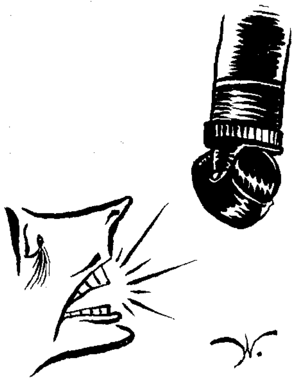
"The thing about Steven is he's still the A.V. guy in junior high school," Tom Hanks says. "You know, the guy who brings the movie projectors around and knows how to thread them, and all that kind of stuff. And I was the same way. So when we go out and do 'guy' things, it's not like we're out, you know, parasailing. We're not spearfishing, or anything like that. We're out just talking about a bunch of stuff and waiting to pick up our kids. We were out walking around on Friday, and a young girl approached him, and she said, 'I just had to tell you,' and she talked to him about

FROM THE ARCHIVES: 1928

ENTER THE TALKIES

BY ROBERT BENCHLEY

THE cruel and relentless myrmidons of science have surrounded Hollywood, and are, at this very moment, waiting, with their spears raised in ominous silence, for the command to enter the city and drag its inhabitants around the walls. The movietone has begun its conquest of the silent movie, and Southern California is in a panic.



Firsthand and reliable reports from the scene present a terrifying picture. Perceiving the advent of the Film Which Talks Like a Man, hundreds of movie stars who have attained their eminence because of a dimple in the chin or a bovine eye, but whose speaking voices could hardly be counted on to put across the sale of a pack of Fatimas in a night club, are now frantically trying to train their larynxes into some sort of gentility. Voice culture has become the order, even the command, of the day.

There has been, they say, a great sale of recording gramophones, with which many a dainty miss tortures herself daily listening to the sound of her own voice in an attempt to locate and correct its faults, and the suicide squad of the Los Angeles police is said to have been doubled in anticipation of the rush for dock-ends which is expected to result.

The greatest bonanza of all, however, comes to the voice teachers, who are reported to be rushing by the covered-wagon-load to the Pacific Coast to get in on the newly opened gold fields. The movie stars have money and are willing to pay anything to keep it. Elocution teachers from New York, whose trade has not been so brisk since Edwin Booth died, are now on their way westward to earn their fortunes teaching public idols to say "Mi-mi-mi-mi" correctly. Old declamation books are being brought out in new, de-luxe editions; and, on a quiet evening, it is said that Beverly Hills resounds with throaty appeals to the Carthaginians and treble accounts of Bob Cratchit's Christmas dinner. If you are burning to know what the home life of your favorite motion-picture star is at the moment, it probably consists of walking up and down his Early Moorish bedroom muttering, "Napoleon was sitting in his tent. Beside him lay the map of Italy."

Not only are the actors in for a summer of worry; the whole personnel is nervous. A community, which even in its heyday lived in constant terror of losing jobs, is now ashen white. The talking picture will call for people who can write and direct dialogue, whole squads of technical men who understand the microphone, and complete remodelling of the mammoth studios, for talking pictures must be made in soundproof rooms; otherwise a passing truck or a whistling workman would ruin the whole scene.

The movietone is a big success in the hinterland, threatening vaudeville and legitimate theatres, and the novelties it makes possible are now important auxiliaries to movie entertainment in New York. One theatre man we heard talking about it said that, being a mechanical thing, it would unquestionably be perfected and that, with the development of technique in presentation, it will mean a revolution in the amusement field. He said that half the legitimate theatres in New York will be out of business as such within ten years. We wouldn't know about that. ♦

'Schindler's List.' And within forty-five seconds this girl had emotionally come undone, because she was saying, 'My Nana used to tell me stories,' and she had connected this movie to her grandma. And Steven, as best he could, reassured her. He put his hand on her shoulder and said, 'I made this movie so that people like yourself would realize . . .'—something that was very appropriate and not very astute. And then she collected herself and she went off. And then we walked across the street, and Steven came emotionally undone. It took him a while to collect himself. And I assume it was because, just as that girl was not prepared for the power of what she had seen Steven do, Steven hasn't been quite prepared for the emotional power of what he has done."

NOW, though, he is not doing much of anything—at least, not by Spielberg standards. True, his MCA-based company, Amblin Entertainment, is producing several feature films, some animation, some TV. And Spielberg himself is dabbling in extracurricular activities—designing rides for the Universal theme park in Orlando, for instance, and investing, with Katzenberg, in a new restaurant chain called Dive, which will sell submarine sandwiches. But, for the first time in his career, Spielberg doesn't know what his next directorial project will be. There are those who, like the Warner Bros. president, Terry Semel, believe that Spielberg will now direct an adaptation of the Robert James Waller best-seller "The Bridges of Madison County," which Amblin is producing. But Semel may be disappointed.

"I have no idea what to do next," Spielberg says. "And, more important, I don't care. And that's what allowed me to go to that Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. I mean I would never have done that—I would have been so driven to do the next project. So I feel I can treat myself to some time off. Right now there's nothing that's inspired me, nothing that makes me want to work in '94 at all. I'm not really interested in making money. That's always come as the result of success, but it's not been my goal, and I've had a very tough time proving that to people. I've never been in it for the money; I was in it for the physical pleasure of filmmaking. It's a physical pleasure being on a set, making a movie, you know—taking images out of your imagination and making them three-dimensional and solid. It's magic."

Spielberg is a fast talker, and the way he stammers and burbles, swallowing some of the words, makes the impression of boyishness even more pronounced: he's like an excitable prepubescent, his hormones zinging, his thoughts scooting by so fast that his mouth can't trap enough language to express them. Beneath the round Armani glasses and the patriarchal beard, Spielberg has the face of the forty-six-year-old man he is; there are deep creases in his neck now, and a genuine gravity in his heavy-lidded eyes. But he is also squirmy and coltish: he bites his fingernails; he twiddles his thumbs. Energy leaks out of him everywhere.

"Maybe when I made 'Indy Two' and 'Indy Three' were the two times I could have been motivated by making money, by an easy slide into home plate," he says. "And if I do a sequel to 'Jurassic Park,' that would be an easy choice. I have no embarrassment in saying that with 'Jurassic' I was really just trying to make a good sequel to 'Jaws.' On land. It's shameless—I can tell you that now. But these days I'd rather make the more difficult choices. I just was so challenged by 'Schindler's List' and so fulfilled by it and so disturbed by it. It so shook up my life, in a good way, that I think I got a little taste of what a lot of other directors have existed on all through their careers—people like Altman, people like Kazan, even people like Preston Sturges, who made fiercely independent films. I suddenly saw what some of the tug was to the real filmmakers, who are always drawn to the subject matter because it's dangerous. I made 'Schindler's List' thinking that if it did entertain, then I would have failed. It was important to me not to set out to please. Because I always had."

Of course, the almost unmentionable secret of "Schindler's List" is that it does entertain: that part of its greatness comes from the fact that it moves swiftly and energetically, that it has storytelling confidence and flair, that it provides pain but also catharsis—that it is not, in short, a lecture but a work of art. I ask Spielberg whether, in the past, his propensity for pleasing an audience had interfered with his pleasing himself. "Yes, definitely," he replies. "It was like believing your own publicity. Everybody kept trying to equate my name with how much money the movie made on opening weekend or in the long run, as opposed to how good the movie was. So if I could stay successful and my movies made money I could stay Steven Spielberg. I would be allowed to keep my name. And I've always had an urge to please the audience, to please people other than myself. I never thought about compromising my own self-respect. I was beyond self-respect. I was into putting on a great show and sitting back and enjoying the audience participation. I felt more like P. T. Barnum than John Ford, for a lot of my career. And I wasn't ashamed of that. I've always thought that filling every seat in every theatre in America was the ultimate vindication and validation. And the thought of pleasing myself only came to me recently."

As we talk, Spielberg is showing me around Amblin, a moviemaking haven like no other in Hollywood. Built in 1983, this place is perhaps the most visible emblem of Spielberg's power: twenty-five thousand square feet of offices, editing rooms, and conference rooms, with a palatial day-care center, a screening room (with popcorn-and-candy counter), a full-scale gym, a video-game room, a restaurant-size kitchen, and a separate building for directors called Movies While You Wait. The style is Santa Fe pueblo, and though the bricks are genuine baked adobe, the whole complex manages to look kitschy and unreal, like a movie set—or the world's fanciest Taco Bell. It sits in a remote and unnaturally quiet corner of the Universal lot (the corner nearest Warner Bros., for Warners and Universal are the two studios Spielberg generally works with), and its oasislike atmosphere is enhanced by lawns, palm trees, and a small Japanese garden: bubbling brook, fake-looking boulders, even a school of koi, the colorful Japanese fish, which Spielberg likes to capture on videotape—he sets their hungry gaping to Puccini, so that they appear to be singing "Madame Butterfly." Nothing here is higher than two stories, because Spielberg has a phobia about elevators (though that hasn't stopped him from keeping an apartment in the upper reaches of New York's Trump Tower), and Spielberg's own office sits above a sunny courtyard; walking there, you feel as though you were padding from the pool back to your room at some Mexican resort hotel. Although Spielberg has been known to be steely in his business dealings and sometimes insensitive about dispensing gratitude, the denizens of Amblin appear to be happy campers.

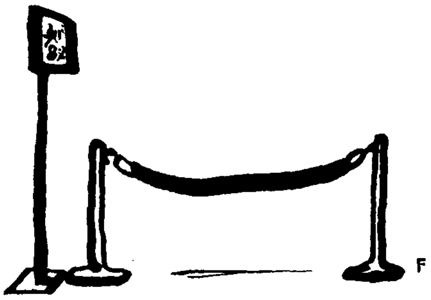
"I began wanting to make people happy from the beginning of my life," Spielberg says. "As a kid, I had puppet shows—I wanted people to like my puppet shows when I was eight years old. My first film was a movie I made when I was twelve, for the Boy Scouts, and I think if I had made a different kind of film, if that film had been, maybe, a study of raindrops coming out of a gutter and forming a puddle in your back yard, I think if I had shown that film to the Boy Scouts and they had sat there and said, 'Wow, that's really beautiful, really interesting. Look at the patterns in the water. Look at the interesting camera angle'—I mean, if I had done that, I might have been a different kind of filmmaker. Or if I had made a story about two people in conflict and trying to work out their differences—which I certainly wouldn't have done at twelve years old—and the same Boy Scout troop scratching the little peach fuzz on their chins had said, 'Boy, that had a lot of depth,' I might have become Marty Scorsese. But instead the Boy Scouts cheered and applauded and laughed at what I did, and I really wanted to do that, to please again."

Of course, he may want to please again now, especially when, as is virtually certain, his latest film receives the Best Picture and Best Director Oscars (an eventuality he is too superstitious to talk about but has long coveted). And it occurs to me that his reluctance to take on a new directorial project may be tinged with fear. In making "Schindler's List," Spielberg threw away all the usual contrivances of his trade—his reliance on drawing storyboards to map out complex shots, his cranes and zoom lenses—and went against his propensity for excess and overemphasis. The movie is inspired; it looks and feels as though it had been directed in a kind of fever, and fevers are difficult to conjure on demand. Spielberg may not know quite how he made "Schindler's List." He may not know where the muscles that built it are, or how to find them again, and that could make him hesitate a very long time before plunging into something fresh. Besides, what *can* he direct now without tumbling from his new Olympus? Surely not "The Bridges of Madison County."

ON the screen, what has always made Spielberg Spielberg is his peculiar combination of technical mastery and playfulness. As a director, he had all the heavy artillery of a Major Motion Picture Maker like David Lean, or a master of spectacle like Cecil B. De Mille: he could manipulate vast landscapes and tremendous crowds; he could fill the screen with intricately choreographed activity; he could make a camera fly across immense expanses and deliver intimacy along with the grandeur. No one since Hitchcock has been better at visual storytelling, at making images—rather than dialogue or explanation—convey the narrative. And no one since Orson Welles has understood so deeply how to stage a shot, how to shift the viewer's eye from foreground to background, how to shuttle characters and incidents in and out of the frame at precisely the right moment, how to add information unobtrusively. Watching his elegant tracking shots—of an enormous archeological dig in "Raiders of the Lost Ark," for instance, or of a posh house party in Shanghai in "Empire of the Sun"—one absorbs the sort of sweep and detail a nineteenth-century novelist might pack into a long, magisterial chapter. And yet the viewer never loses sight of the character who is guiding him through the scene—never becomes aware of the camera's dexterity, never spots the holes that are being opened up at just the right moment for just the right line of dialogue, never loses the urgent pressure of the plot against one's back. No technical challenge appears to be beyond Spielberg. In his cumbersome Second World War comedy, "1941," he used miniatures to stage dogfights and submarine attacks with a deftness that few practitioners of that technology had ever imagined possible. He made platoons of cars seem to flirt and shimmy in his first feature, "The Sugarland Express"; he staged two of the sassiest, most high-spirited musical numbers ever seen on film in "1941" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom"; he created the most convincing and sympathetic outer-space creature in movie history in "E.T." and built dinosaurs that looked as real as house cats in "Jurassic Park."

But perhaps what has most charmed the fans of Steven Spielberg (and what most surprised them when he made "Schindler's List") is how lightly he has worn his gifts. Has anyone else ever deployed so much know-how in the service of mere play? The better Spielberg movies are jokey and spry: long passages in them have a refreshingly tossed-off, improvisatory feel, and his approach to pleasing an audience teeters between wowing us and tickling us. When Spielberg arrived, in the middle of the seventies, his films were like a balm. Amid the sourness of a culture so recently bullied by Vietnam, Watergate, and recession, here was a filmmaker who soft-pedalled his obvious power, who could scare the living daylights out of you or thrill you to the marrow but always grounded his vision in the reassuring bedrock of suburbia—of brand names we recognized and jokes we knew. If George Lucas's "Star Wars" films imagined an extraordinary world and peopled it with ordinary characters, Spielberg began with the ordinary and then revealed its astonishments. That felt like a generous gesture; and it was generosity, above all, that marked Spielberg's movies. He seemed to know in his bones what his audiences expected, and he always delivered more—more danger, more thrills, more wonder, more light.

And he was generous in another way as well. For every macho blowhard crushing a beer can, like the Robert Shaw character in "Jaws," Spielberg provided a likable doofus crushing a Styrofoam cup, like Richard Dreyfuss. His movies made it O.K. not to be remarkable by telling us that we already were. In that sense, "Schindler's List" itself is not so much a departure as a deepening of a central Spielberg theme, for the story of Schindler is not the story of a born hero, like Raoul Wallenberg, but the story of a common—even a base—man. Just as Richard Dreyfuss is "chosen" for transformation by the aliens in "Close Encounters," just as Christian Bale is chosen by John Malkovich in "Empire of the Sun" and young Henry Thomas by E.T., so Oskar Schindler is chosen, in a sense—whereas a more outstanding and therefore more scrupulous or obtrusive man might not have been. Before the war, the movie tells us, Schindler had been something of a ne'er-do-well; after the war, he was a failure. And yet under the right circumstances he becomes a savior. It is only the presence of monstrous evil that makes Schindler a good man—and, finally, an exceptional one.



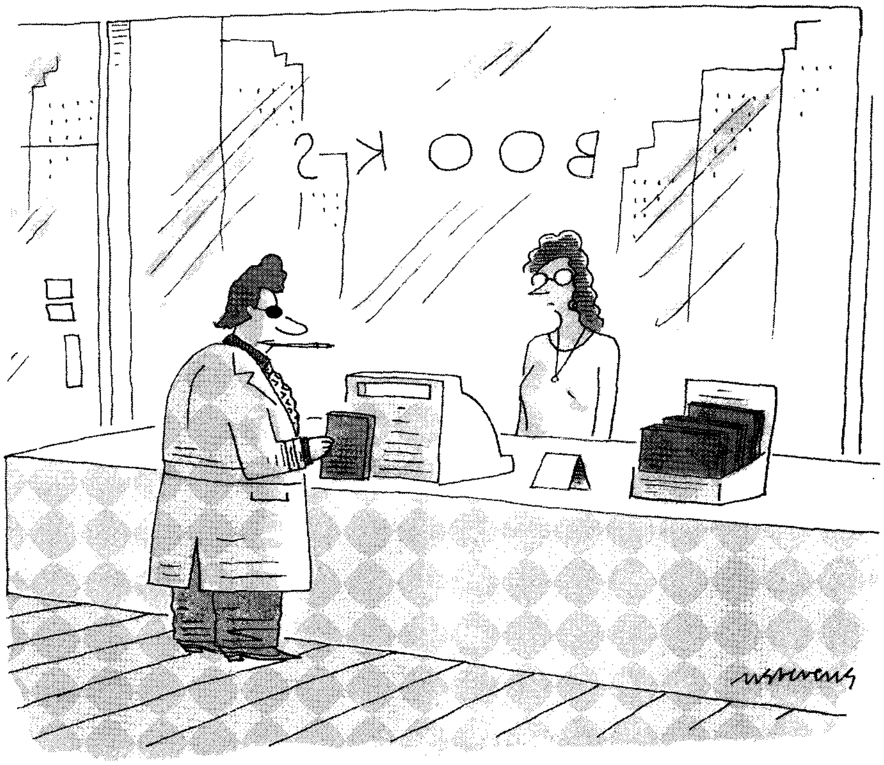
SPIELBERG, of course, rather resembles these ordinary characters of his. And as you race with him through his day it is not necessarily apparent that he is in command of an empire. Amblin has about forty-five employees, nine of whom report directly to Spielberg. There is a TV division (run by the veteran television executive Tony Thomopoulos); a merchandising division; an animation department, with offices in London and at Warner Bros. in Los Angeles; and a motion-picture division, with three development executives and their staffs. For the most part, Spielberg leaves the television and merchandising departments alone, but he's deeply involved in the animation, which, unlike most of the TV and movie production, has not just Amblin's name on it but his own. "It's just selfish," he says. "I get a real pleasure out of animation and less pleasure out of doing TV shows and looking at dinosaur toys."

The movie division, meanwhile, has been leaderless since the departure of Amblin's president, Kathleen Kennedy, early last year. (She left to start her own production company with her husband, Spielberg's sometime producer Frank Marshall.) But in May the screenwriter and producer Walter Parkes will become Amblin's president, and his wife, the producer Laurie MacDonald, will become his executive vice-president.

"Walter has extremely good taste as a producer and as a writer," Spielberg says. "And I really wanted Amblin to be more writer-driven. I think the weak link of some of our produced movies has been in the screenplays, and I think it's partly because in recent years we've had a tendency not to stay with one writer for a long enough time. If a writer flamed out, we would just give up on him and go to another writer.

"Here's an example. 'Schindler's List' went through many, many stages of development, but I always stuck with Steve Zaillian, and Steve stayed on the project even when he and I both thought the best thing for 'Schindler's List' was for me to go south and Steve to go north. I liked Steve's screenplay, but I wanted the story to be less vertical—less a character story of just Oskar Schindler, and more of a horizontal approach, taking in the Holocaust as the raison d'être of the whole project. What I really wanted to see was the relationship between Oskar Schindler—the German point of view—and Itzhak Stern—the Jewish point of view. And I wanted to invoke more of the actual stories of the victims—the Dresners, the Nussbaums, the Rosners. At first, Steve resisted, but then we went to Poland together, and the plane ride back was cathartic. We went over the script page by page, and Steve was having a second vision. So, even when Steve was stubborn and resistant to change and I threatened to bring somebody else on, we went through all those sorts of marital strife, but we succeeded with each other. And I wouldn't have succeeded if I had switched and gone to somebody else."

Zaillian says, "I had made a rule for myself that any scene that didn't involve Schindler wasn't in there. Schindler didn't have to be in the scene—the scene just had to have some effect on him. But there are now some scenes that resulted from our work together that don't do that. The biggest change when Spielberg got involved was the liquidation-of-the-ghetto sequence, which in my original script was about two or three pages, and which finally ended up to be about thirty pages. Spielberg said, 'I want to follow everybody we've met up to this point through this sequence.' So that was something that changed in a big way. And then, as we got closer to filming, one of the survivors might talk to Spielberg about something or there might be something in the book that he particularly responded to, and that would go in. I think his changes were good. The thing is, when he reads something he sees it visually. I mean, there are three hundred and fifty-nine scenes in this movie, and every one of them has to have a visual idea. And from my very brief experience of having directed one film, 'Searching for Bobby Fischer,' I know that after a certain point you run out of ideas. And he didn't. His great strength is really in being able to visually interpret a script."



"I'd like to buy this book and also the movie rights."

• •

IT is a sunny Tuesday during the week before the earthquake, and Spielberg and I are on our way to a "punch-up" session for "Casper the Friendly Ghost," which Amblin is adapting from the Harvey Comics series. The movie was written by Sherri Stoner and Deanna Oliver, veterans of the Warner Bros. animation group, but Spielberg is putting the screenplay through a process more common to sitcom production than to film—a roundtable. In this one, Stoner and Oliver join eight other writers to go over the script, adding new gags and polishing old ones. Spielberg first tried this technique on an Amblin production of "The Flintstones" (whose director, Brian Levant, has been drafted to run the roundtable); the resultant dispute over "Flintstones" writing credits has become a bit of a nightmare. But as we enter the conference room the atmosphere is jolly: the assembled company is singing, practically in unison, "We had joy, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun." Spielberg pretends shock. "I turn my back for five minutes, and now it's a musical?" he says.

The matter at hand is a scene in which a ghost enters the mouth of a sleeping middle-aged man; the man wakes up, looks in the mirror, and sees his face metamorphosing into other faces before his eyes. But the scene's particulars are growing fuzzy, and Spielberg, sitting in a chair a few feet away from the conference table, calls out, "Don't lose the good stuff, you guys! Remember, I committed to the script four drafts ago."

"So what was the good stuff then?" somebody yells.

Spielberg grins and shakes his head. Then he turns to me. "What I prefer to do is let them create all this," he says, "and then they give me pages to read, and I come in with my comments. They're mainly logic comments. I'm a little bit fastidious about that, because when you do fantasy it has to be based on common logic. When my kids see movies, they'll buy anything if it sort of makes sense. But if they're confused they get pulled out of the movie. You know, when I was seven years old it used to piss me off in serials when in Week 14 the car would go over the cliff and it would blow up and in Week 15 you see a shot you didn't see in Week 14—the hero jumping out of the car before it went over the cliff and blew up. I was pissed off that they cheated like that. They tell you the truth in Week 14 and lie to you the next week."

"Sort of like being engaged," an eavesdropping writer adds.

"Steven? Could I ask you something?" It's Sherri Stoner. "O.K., we've got him waking up after the ghost enters him and then he looks in the mirror."

"Yeah," Spielberg says. "And what he sees is that he's Mel Gibson, or whatever movie star will let his face be used for seven seconds. At a billion dollars a second." General laughter. "And then he says, 'Lookin' good.' And listen, you guys. Now you have the ghost entering through the guy's ear. It's gotta be through his mouth. You have to have the guy snoring, and have him enter through the mouth. Ear's no good. Mouth's much better."

"O.K.," Stoner says. "So then after he turns into Mel Gibson we want him to turn into, like, a monster face, right? And then he screams?"

"No, no," Spielberg says. "See, it's much funnier if he sees three different faces, including a monster face, and he *doesn't* scream. He's just looking at them and making little comments. And then he sees his own face. And that's when he screams. *That's* funny."

"So what's the best monster face?" Stoner says.

"I thought Mike Ditka was next," another writer says.

"Well, he could go from Mel Gibson to Mike Ditka," Spielberg says. "The problem with Mike Ditka is my wife thinks *he's* handsome, too."

Another writer: "Rodney Dangerfield."

"To go from Mel Gibson to Rodney Dangerfield is interesting," Spielberg says. "And then a monster, like someone like Wolfman. And then he sees his own face and he screams. That's the broad arc."

"How about Jerry Lewis?" Deanna Oliver says. "Jerry Lewis is a lot scarier than Rodney Dangerfield."

As if on cue, all ten writers unleash their Jerry Lewis imitations, crossing their eyes and screaming the word "Lady!" over and over again.

"Come on, come on," Brian Levant yells. "Let's focus."

As the dust settles, an older writer named Lenny Ripps turns to me. " 'Schindler's' would have been a lot funnier if we'd done it this way," he says.

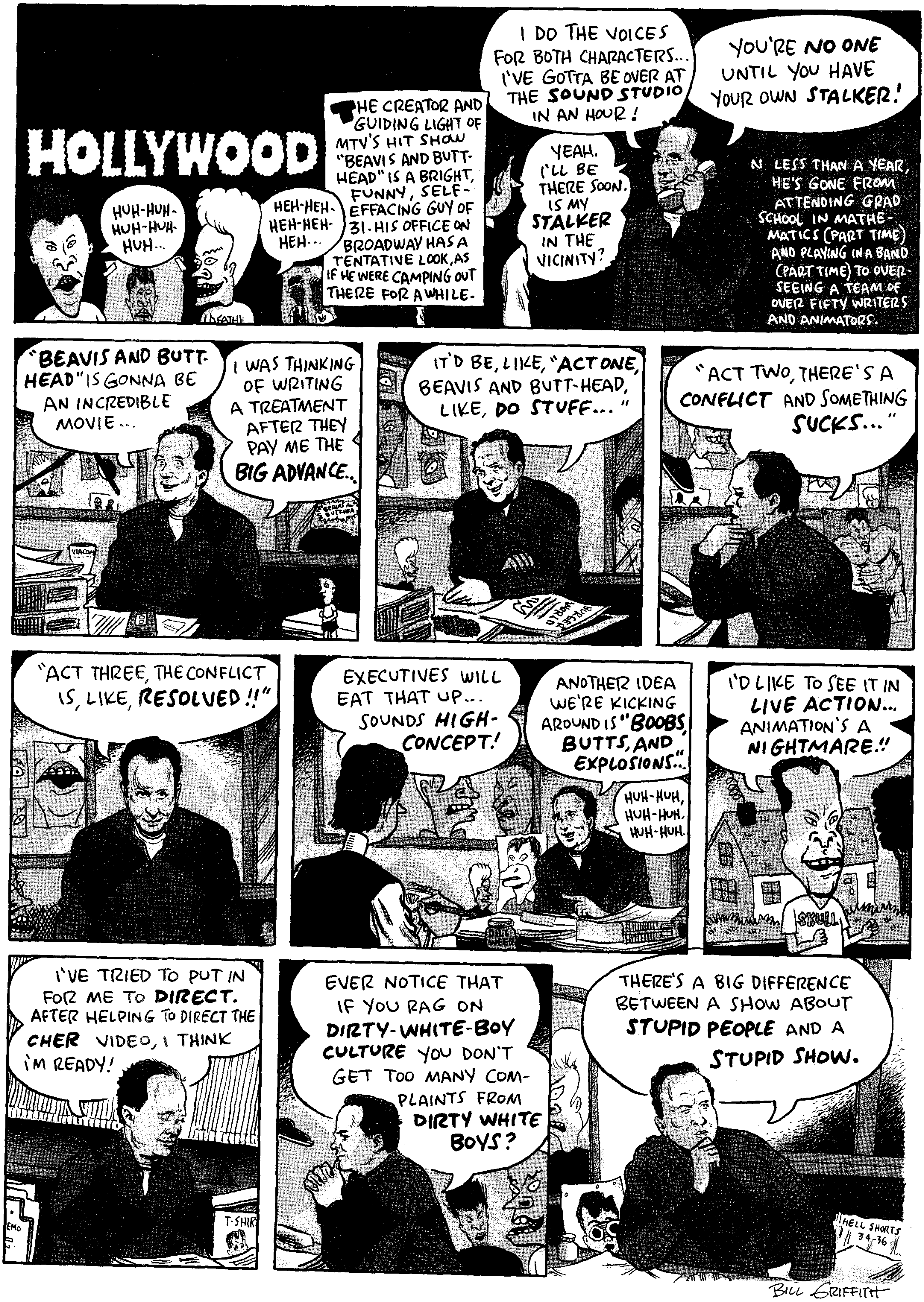
If you ask Spielberg where his ideas come from, he pleads ignorance. "Those images aren't coming from any place in my head," he says. "I guess it's just something that happens. I can't explain it, and I would be fooling everybody to say that I have a lot of self-control over what I do. Basically, I don't. I don't have a lot of experience in really talking and really dealing with my life in an analytical way. I just kind of live it. A true artist works from someplace inside himself that he is not capable of confronting when he's having breakfast. When I'm having breakfast, I read the cereal box. I read the top, the sides, the front, the back, and the bottom, just like I did when I was a kid."

He admits to watching too much television—"I junk out on bad TV movies," he says—and he has an insatiable passion for video games. Sometimes he plays them by modem with Robin Williams, who lives in San Francisco. Sometimes he just plays by himself. He plays after the kids go to bed, and on weekends, and sometimes on movie sets.

"He has little hand things," Dustin Hoffman says. "On 'Hook,' while they were lighting, he shut everybody out, and he sat on the camera dolly and he played those—what are they, Game Boy? And then for a while he was getting all the flight information from L.A. International Airport, so he's sitting on the dolly and he's listening to the pilots. And he's doing that *while* he's playing Game Boy."

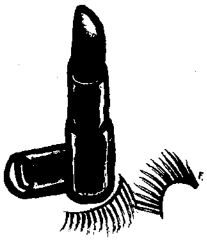
Here he is at lunch with Janusz Kaminski, the Polish-born cinematographer who directed the extraordinary black-and-white photography of "Schindler's List." Kaminski is not the brooding artiste one might expect. He is a whimsical thirty-four-year-old moon-faced character with prodigious dimples, and he has spent much of the morning hanging outside Spielberg's office saying things like "This Holly Hunter—maybe I meet her. I like very much. She is wonderful girl." But now we are eating fish at a restaurant in the Universal CityWalk mall, and he and Spielberg have been reminiscing about filming "Schindler's List" in Poland. Spielberg suddenly changes the subject. "You know what you should try, Janusz?" he says. "I did this last night—it was amazing. You take a piece of Saran Wrap and put it over a flashlight, and wrinkle the Saran Wrap up. What I do is, I do shadow shows with my hands for my kids. I lie in bed with my kids—we have a white ceiling—and I put a flashlight pitched between my legs and I do these shows where my hands are huge on the ceiling. I do T. rexes attacking lawyers—I do everything. They really enjoy that. And then last night I had put the flashlight down, and it happened to be next to some Hanukkah wrapping that was clear like cellophane. And I saw the pattern against the wall with the flashlight. I thought it was fantastic, so I grabbed the cellophane, put it on the flashlight, and began making patterns on the walls. And it was amazing—it's like ocean waves on your wall. I don't know how you use it, but it was *amazing!*"

Can we understand how amazing? Perhaps not. Even Kaminski, who is nearly as boyish as Spielberg, looks a little puzzled beneath his grin. But then that has always been Spielberg's problem, ever since the beginning—the simultaneous urgency and impossibility of communicating what it is he sees. You can feel it in the oddly repetitive way he explains himself to an interviewer, stating and restating, doubling back on his sentences, laboriously spelling things out, so that everything is perfectly clear. His films, too, are, above all, emphatic. His signature storytelling devices insist that we get the point: the thunderous John Williams music; the famous reaction shots that cue the audience to feel fear or wonder; the brilliant light that Spielberg shines in our eyes, forcing our attention, hiding things or revealing them or enrobing them in awe. The entrance of a hero is announced by framing him in a doorway, silhouetted


HOLLYWOOD
HUH-HUH-HUH-HUH-HUH...
HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH...
DEATH
THE CREATOR AND GUIDING LIGHT OF MTV'S HIT SHOW "BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD" IS A BRIGHT, FUNNY, SELF-EFFACING GUY OF 31. HIS OFFICE ON BROADWAY HAS A TENTATIVE LOOK, AS IF HE WERE CAMPING OUT THERE FOR A WHILE.
I DO THE VOICES FOR BOTH CHARACTERS... I'VE GOTTA BE OVER AT THE SOUND STUDIO IN AN HOUR!
YEAH, I'LL BE THERE SOON. IS MY STALKER IN THE VICINITY?
YOU'RE NO ONE UNTIL YOU HAVE YOUR OWN STALKER!
N LESS THAN A YEAR, HE'S GONE FROM ATTENDING GRAD SCHOOL IN MATHEMATICS (PART TIME) AND PLAYING IN A BAND (PART TIME) TO OVERSEEING A TEAM OF OVER FIFTY WRITERS AND ANIMATORS.
"BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD" IS GONNA BE AN INCREDIBLE MOVIE...
I WAS THINKING OF WRITING A TREATMENT AFTER THEY PAY ME THE BIG ADVANCE..
VIACOM
IT'D BE, LIKE, "ACT ONE, BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD, LIKE, DO STUFF..."
BURGER WORLD
"ACT TWO, THERE'S A CONFLICT AND SOMETHING SUCKS..."
"ACT THREE, THE CONFLICT IS, LIKE, RESOLVED!!"
EXECUTIVES WILL EAT THAT UP... SOUNDS HIGH-CONCEPT!
ANOTHER IDEA WE'RE KICKING AROUND IS "BOOBS, BUTTS, AND EXPLOSIONS"..
HUH-HUH, HUH-HUH, HUH-HUH.
I'D LIKE TO SEE IT IN LIVE ACTION... ANIMATION'S A NIGHTMARE!!
SKULL
I'VE TRIED TO PUT IN FOR ME TO DIRECT. AFTER HELPING TO DIRECT THE CHER VIDEO, I THINK I'M READY!
T-SHIR
EVER NOTICE THAT IF YOU RAG ON DIRTY-WHITE-BOY CULTURE YOU DON'T GET TOO MANY COMPLAINTS FROM DIRTY WHITE BOYS?
THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SHOW ABOUT STUPID PEOPLE AND A STUPID SHOW.
HELL SHORTS 34-36
BILL GRIFFITH

against the light, the camera looking reverently up at him, even rushing in to greet him. At its best, this sort of thing comes across as bounty; at its worst, as egregious overkill. Except for "Schindler's List," Spielberg's movies are based on the power of more.

He is harsh with his film crews, even ruthless, and for similar reasons—he's impatient with them when they don't deliver what he thinks he has communicated. "Oftentimes he's thinking so far ahead that he doesn't want to waste the time explaining to anybody what he's trying to do," Kathleen Kennedy, who ran Amblin from 1983 until last year, says. "He needs people around who will just do it, and not question—be there and just execute, and not try to understand every little detail—because he's on the fly. When we were doing the big airplane sequence in 'Raiders of the Lost Ark,' where they have the fistfight under the wing—that whole time from when Indiana Jones runs out to the wing until the airplane explodes is about a hundred and twenty cuts. They can only go together one way. And he knew already in his mind exactly what every single shot would be. And he just *sees* all of that. And what happens is he gets impatient, because once he sees it he doesn't want to lose what he sees."



He is also, it is said, an unusually tough businessman, a ferocious, canny, and obsessively secretive negotiator, and not a terribly generous one. Although Spielberg has long been the wealthiest director in America—and, indeed, one of the wealthiest men in the entertainment business (*Forbes* estimates his earnings over the last two years at seventy-two million dollars)—even his sister Anne Spielberg, who co-wrote and co-produced the movie "Big" and has several projects brewing at Amblin, says, "He's a very tough bargainer. He's a hard man to deal with on those things. There are times I'd be tempted to take things other places, where I know that I would get a better deal."

Spielberg is still a demon negotiator, but when he developed his close friendship with Steve Ross, the late chairman of Time Warner, his pockets began to open. "After I met Steve," Spielberg says, "I went from being a miser to a philanthropist, because I knew him, because that's what he showed me to do. I was just never spending my money. I gave nothing to causes that were important to me. And when I met Steve, I just observed the pleasure that he drew from his own private philanthropy. And it was total pleasure. And it was private, anonymous giving. So most everything I do is anonymous. I have my name on a couple of buildings, because in a way that's a fund-raiser. But eighty per cent of what I do is anonymous. And I get so much pleasure from that—it's one of the things that Steve Ross opened my heart to."

Ross, Spielberg has said, was like a father to him, and for Spielberg that designation carries considerable emotional freight. One can sense it in his films, which are full of yearning for home and family, and especially for fathers—departed fathers (as in "E.T.," "Empire of the Sun," and "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade"), failed fathers ("The Sugarland Express," "Hook," the grandfather in "Jurassic Park"), fathers who become distant, evil, or unrecognizable ("Close Encounters," "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," "The Color Purple"), and fathers who return to save the day ("Jaws," "Jurassic Park," "Hook"). Even "Schindler's List" can be viewed as a story of patriarchy—of Schindler, an irresponsible child-man who must become father enough to protect his immense "family" from the enormity that will otherwise destroy it. In Spielberg's movies, fatherhood has a mystical shimmer.

HIS relationship with his own father, though, was rather bumpy. Arnold Spielberg was a computer pioneer and something of a workaholic; Steven's mother, Leah, was a former concert pianist. The marriage was never a very happy one, and the Spielbergs finally split up in 1966, when their son was eighteen. "My dad was of that World War Two ethic," Spielberg says. "He brought home the bacon, and my mom cooked it, and we ate it. I went to my dad with things, but he was always analytical. I was more passionate in my approach to any question, and so we always clashed. I was yearning for drama."

The boyhood of Steven Spielberg has been recounted so often that it has become a minor American legend, an ur-myth for the age of the triumphant dweeb: how the pencil-necked Jew at a suburban Gentile school won over the local bully by starring him in his films, how dissecting frogs made him sick in biology class (and inspired a classic scene in "E.T."), how gawky young Steve purposely lost a road race so a retarded boy could beat him, how the cruelties visited upon him by his smooth Wasp classmates drove him into the arms of his art. His sister Anne, who is two years his junior, recalls some of it a little differently. "He had more friends than he remembers having," she says. "I don't think he realized the crushes that some girls had on him. Some of my friends had major crushes on him. If you looked at a picture of him then, you'd say, Yes, there's a nerd. There's the crewcut, the flattop, there are the ears. There's the skinny body. But he really had an incredible personality. He could make people do things. He made everything he was going to do sound like you wished you were a part of it."

That gift served him well from the time he began making 8-mm. movies in his Scottsdale garage at least until 1969, when Sidney Sheinberg, then the head of Universal's television department, saw Spielberg's rather saccharine short film "Amblin' " and signed him to a seven-year contract as a TV director. The producer Richard Zanuck, who with his partner, David Brown, gave Spielberg his first stab at a feature film, remembers much the same quality. The movie they made together was "The Sugarland Express," and Spielberg was only twenty-four when he started shooting it. Zanuck says, "I was thinking, Well, let's take it easy. Let's get the kid acclimated to this big-time stuff. But when I got out there the first day he was about ready to get this first shot, and it was the most elaborate fucking thing I've ever seen in my life. I mean tricky: all-in-one shots, the camera going and stopping, people going in and out. But he had such confidence in the way he was handling it. Here he was, a young little punk kid, with a lot of seasoned crew around, a major actress"—Goldie Hawn—"on hand, and instead of starting with something easy, he picked a very complicated thing that required all kinds of very intricate timing. And it worked incredibly well—and not only from a technical standpoint, but the performances were very good. I knew right then and there, without any doubt, that this guy probably knew more at that age about the mechanics of working out a shot than anybody alive at that time, no matter how many pictures they'd made. He took to it like—you know, like he was born with a knowledge of cinema. And he never ceased to amaze me from that day on."

Although "The Sugarland Express" was a box-office flop, Zanuck and Brown immediately hired Spielberg to direct another picture—"Jaws." The project was star-crossed from the beginning. On the third day of shooting, the mechanical shark sank. By the time it could be made functional, the movie was a hundred days behind schedule and more than a hundred per cent over budget. "I was panicked," Spielberg says. "I was out of my mind with fear—not of being replaced, even though people were trying to fire me, but of letting everybody down. I was twenty-six, and even though I actually felt like a veteran by that time, nobody else felt that way about me. I looked younger than twenty-six. I looked seventeen, and I had acne, and that doesn't help instill confidence in seasoned crews."

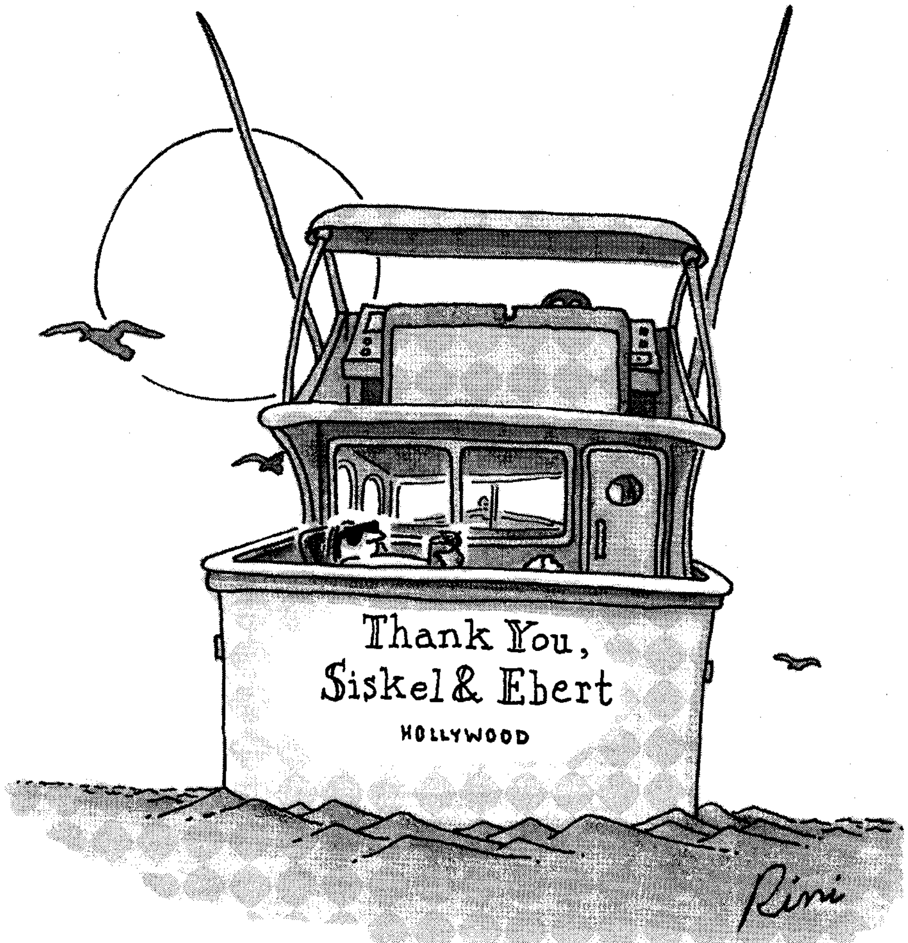
In the end, of course, "Jaws" proved to be a terrific movie, a cheeky, unpredictable thriller that set the tone for a generation of cheeky, rather more predictable thrillers—and became, at the time, the highest-grossing film in history. Spielberg collected three million dollars, which in 1975 was enough to make him very rich—even Hollywood rich. But he was also movie-obsessed, to the exclusion of everything else; like his father before him, he didn't have a life. Although the memoirs of Julia Phillips, the co-producer of "Close Encounters," mention his dating such Hollywood tigresses as Victoria Principal and Sarah Miles, Spielberg says, "I didn't stop to notice if women were interested in me, or if there was a party that I might have been invited to. I didn't ever take the time to revel in the glory of a successful or money-making film. I didn't stop to enjoy. By the time 'Jaws' was in theatres, I was already deeply into production on 'Close Encounters,' and by the time 'Close Encounters' was released I was deeply into production on '1941,' and before '1941' was over I was severely into preproduction on 'Raiders of the Lost Ark.' So I never had a chance to sit down and pat myself on the back or spend my money or date or go on vacations in Europe. I just haven't done that, and I just haven't done that because I put my moviemaking ahead of some of the results. I thought that if I stopped I would never get started again, that I would lose the momentum."

The momentum? The ability to make hits? To keep the ideas coming?

"No, the momentum of being interested in working. I was afraid that if I stopped I would be punished for enjoying my success by losing my interest in working. Like I feel right now. If I felt ten years ago what I'm feeling today, I would panic. I would really panic. I wouldn't know how to handle these feelings."

But Spielberg appears to have socialized more than he remembers, and in 1976 he met Amy Irving, the daughter of the actress Priscilla Pointer and the actor-director Jules Irving, who was one of the founding directors of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre. Spielberg was immediately smitten. He and Irving carried on a tempestuous and troubled relationship, breaking up around the time she made the 1980 film "Honeysuckle Rose" with Willie Nelson, and finally reuniting dramatically in 1983, when Spielberg flew to India to scout locations for "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom." Irving, who had been filming "The Far Pavilions" there, surprised him at the airport. They were married in 1985, and Max was born the same year, but the marriage was stormy almost from the start.

"I like Amy a lot," Spielberg's old friend Matthew Robbins says. But, he adds, "when Steven decided to marry her I was very worried. It was no fun to go over there, because there was an electric tension in the air. It was competitive as to whose dining table this is, whose career we're gonna talk about, or whether he even approved of what she was interested in—her friends and her actor life. He really was uncomfortable. The child in Spielberg believed so thoroughly in the possibility of perfect marriage, the institution of marriage, the Norman Rockwell turkey on the table, everyone's head bowed in prayer—all this stuff. And Amy was sort of a glit-



tering prize, smart as hell, gifted, and beautiful, but definitely edgy and provocative and competitive. She would not provide him any ease. There was nothing to go home to that was cozy." Spielberg and Irving remain good friends (Irving now lives with the Brazilian film director Bruno Barreto), but they divorced in 1989. Irving's settlement was reported to have been a record-breaker—though she has denied rumors that it was in the neighborhood of a hundred million dollars.

During the ups and downs, there had been other women, and one of them was Kate Capshaw. Spielberg had met her in 1983, when she auditioned for the role she eventually won in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," and though friends say that for him their early relationship was essentially a fling, Capshaw was resolute from the start. "I think it was just the way he smelled," she says. "He smelled like my family. It was a smell of familiarity. I'm speaking not just metaphorically but olfactorily. They say that once a woman takes a whiff of her infant you can blindfold her and march twenty babies in front of her and she'll pick hers, and that's how it felt to me. I felt like I was blindfolded and took a smell and said, 'This is the guy.' "

Capshaw giggles a lot when she talks, and indulges in girlish squeals; her hair is sometimes reddish brown and sometimes blond, her eyes are a keen, pale blue, and, though she has a fetching sexy-pixie air, one senses a will of steel beneath the wiles. She is not a sophisticate or a fashion nut, and she doesn't pretend to be. Today she is wearing coveralls over a leotard, and we are tramping around Spielberg's verdant Pacific Palisades neighborhood with their youngest child, a very blond two-year-old boy named Sawyer, tucked in a stroller. Clearly, she has taken Spielberg in hand, managing the house here and another in East Hampton and the five kids (one each from previous marriages, two from their own, one adopted). They have been married for two years and have lived together for four. And the winning of Spielberg was a long campaign. Capshaw even converted from Methodism to Judaism, a move widely thought to have been contrived as the final snare. Both Spielberg and Capshaw deny any ulterior motive, of course, and Capshaw says, "When I converted, Steven was delighted, but then all the people in his family who were supposed to fall to their knees in exultation didn't say a word, because they so wanted me to know that it didn't matter to them."

Capshaw says she had long been drawn to Judaism; she liked its emphasis on the family. "We were watching 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom' the other night on television," she says. "And I turned to Steven and I said, 'What happened to my career after that movie?' He said, 'You weren't supposed to have a career. You were supposed to be with me.' And it's true." She peers at me for a moment, and perhaps she reads some consternation in my face. "Oh, I absolutely feel that way," she says. "I think you have to have a great deal of ambition—these careers of our A-list ladies don't happen by accident. And if they do they don't sustain. And I didn't do the things you have to do. My focus was on Steven and a large family."

JUST now, their three-year-old daughter, Sasha, is running around the Spielberg living room naked, wearing a plastic knights-of-the-Round-Table helmet, brandishing a rubbery sword, and screaming at the top of her lungs. Her father is standing by the fireplace, and he is on the telephone with Robin Williams. "I've only been playing Syndicate," Spielberg is saying, "and it's much harder to play. They put a lot more graphic design into some of the bullets. And I haven't got far enough into it yet, but I hear there's air cover. And there's also supply drops and there's also air strikes. We only played two countries, and I got my ass whipped in the second country. So I've got another seventy-five countries to go. So you want to do a mission today? O.K. Let's do it. Let's do one mission."

The house we are in is huge, white, airy, and Mediterranean in style, and it sits on five and a half acres of palm trees and gardens, along with several large outbuildings—a screening room, an office, a guesthouse. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., once lived here, and so did David O. Selznick when he was making "Gone with the Wind," and Cary Grant when he was married to Barbara Hutton. Spielberg has renovated much of it, but parts of the original structure remain. On one living-room wall is a small Modigliani, and, on the adjacent wall, a big, luminous Monet. Under that is a table, which, like most of the other furniture in the house, is in the Arts and Crafts style (much of it by Gustav Stickley), and on the table are three scripts under glass: originals of "Citizen Kane," "Casablanca," and Orson Welles' radio broadcast "The War of the Worlds." Everywhere else you look there are Norman Rockwell paintings.

There is a mystery here, and it is, finally, the mystery that makes "Schindler's List" so hard to fathom. What is on the screen is overwhelming—tremendously moving; insightful about the nature of evil and even the nature of goodness. And yet here is the man who made it, an overgrown boy in a baseball cap, with a sweet, happy wife and five lovely kids and, behind him, a childhood whose sufferings were so much milder and more banal than the sufferings that popular mythology insists that an artist must undergo. Here he is, playing video games.

I remember something Kathleen Kennedy told me: "Steven has trouble with a level of intimacy. He gets close to people to a point, and then it begins to break down, because I don't think Steven is always comfortable communicating his feelings. His inability to trust very many people creates a certain amount of personal loneliness for him. But I also think it comes from just wanting to be by himself and be close to some creative, inanimate world he can live within, rather than deal with the real world and real people. I've sometimes witnessed him doing this thing: I see him withdrawing, and he's going into a place where he's more comfortable. He goes to that place, and it is completely devoid of other people and other pressures—it's almost Zen-like. And he comes out with extraordinary things. He goes there just like a monk. And he doesn't even know what it is."

What it is, perhaps, is a kind of sandbox, and, once he is in it, everything is mutable—subject only to the laws of play. Spielberg understands those laws instinctively, and he can apply them to anything. Whatever subject you throw at him, large or small, great or mean—the Holocaust or Casper the Friendly Ghost—is taken back into the sandbox and played with until he has made it marvellous.

Play is a kind of manipulation, and Spielberg is an unusually deft manipulator. Richard Dreyfuss likes to tell a story about a long night near the end of the shooting of "Jaws," during which Spielberg kept Dreyfuss wide awake by going through the movie scene by scene and explaining how else he might have shot it—how it might have been, for instance, an art film, a film that would call attention to Spielberg's own directorial technique instead of to where the shark might pop up next. Spielberg's talent is protean, overlush: he can tell your story better than you can, and then tell it a different way, better still. When he is producing, he flits from project to project like some pollinating insect, sinking proboscis-deep into the fantasy at hand, and then going on to the next.

But, of course, there *is* a difference between Casper and the Holocaust, and even between his other great films—"Jaws," "Close Encounters," "E.T."—and "Schindler's List." It is too easy to say that the difference lies in the subject matter. Rather, the difference lies in the quality of emotion that Spielberg brings to it. "Schindler's List" is angry. And the anger in it, one feels, is not like the other Spielberg emotions. The terror in "Jaws," the wonder in "Close Encounters," even the longing for love in "E.T."—all those things come, in some way, from the boy playing in his sandbox; they are beautifully manipulated, but manipulated all the same. The anger in "Schindler's List" is not. It feels earned and vital; it feels as though it took even Spielberg by surprise.

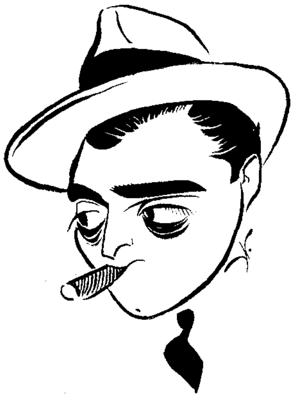
And it leaves him in a difficult situation. For if you talk with him, watch him work, observe the way he lives, you know that he still resides in the sandbox—and that it is going to take something very unusual to make him rise from it again.

He knows it, too. "I'm kind of in a pickle," he says. "And I'm looking forward to not getting out of it for a long time." ♦

FROM THE ARCHIVES: 1972

MIKE TODD

BY S. J. PERELMAN



SQUAT, muscular, intensely dynamic, Mike Todd was the very pattern of the modern major moviemaker—voluble, cunning, full of huckster shrewdness, slippery as a silverfish, and yet undeniably magnetic. In short, a con man, a *tumler* with a bursting Napoleonic complex. The financial ramifications of any movie are cloaked in mystery; those of "Around the World in Eighty Days" were as impenetrable as the Mato Grosso. To this day, I venture to say, nobody knows where or how Todd promoted the wherewithal to make his chef-d'œuvre, or who got what share of the golden hoard. All I know is that my pittance was extracted only by deep surgery.

What with another costly crowd scene at the Gare du Nord, involving a number of French screen luminaries, the budget was becoming visibly distended, and Todd decided he had sufficient European footage. In one frantic morning, he organized a second unit to make process shots in India and the Far East, providing its members with tickets to Rangoon, yellow monk's robes, and begging bowls so they could scrounge enough rice to continue onward. Then, distributing a reckless largesse of smiles and handshakes to the technical crew, he raced off to California to do the Western exteriors, and our paths diverged for a spell.

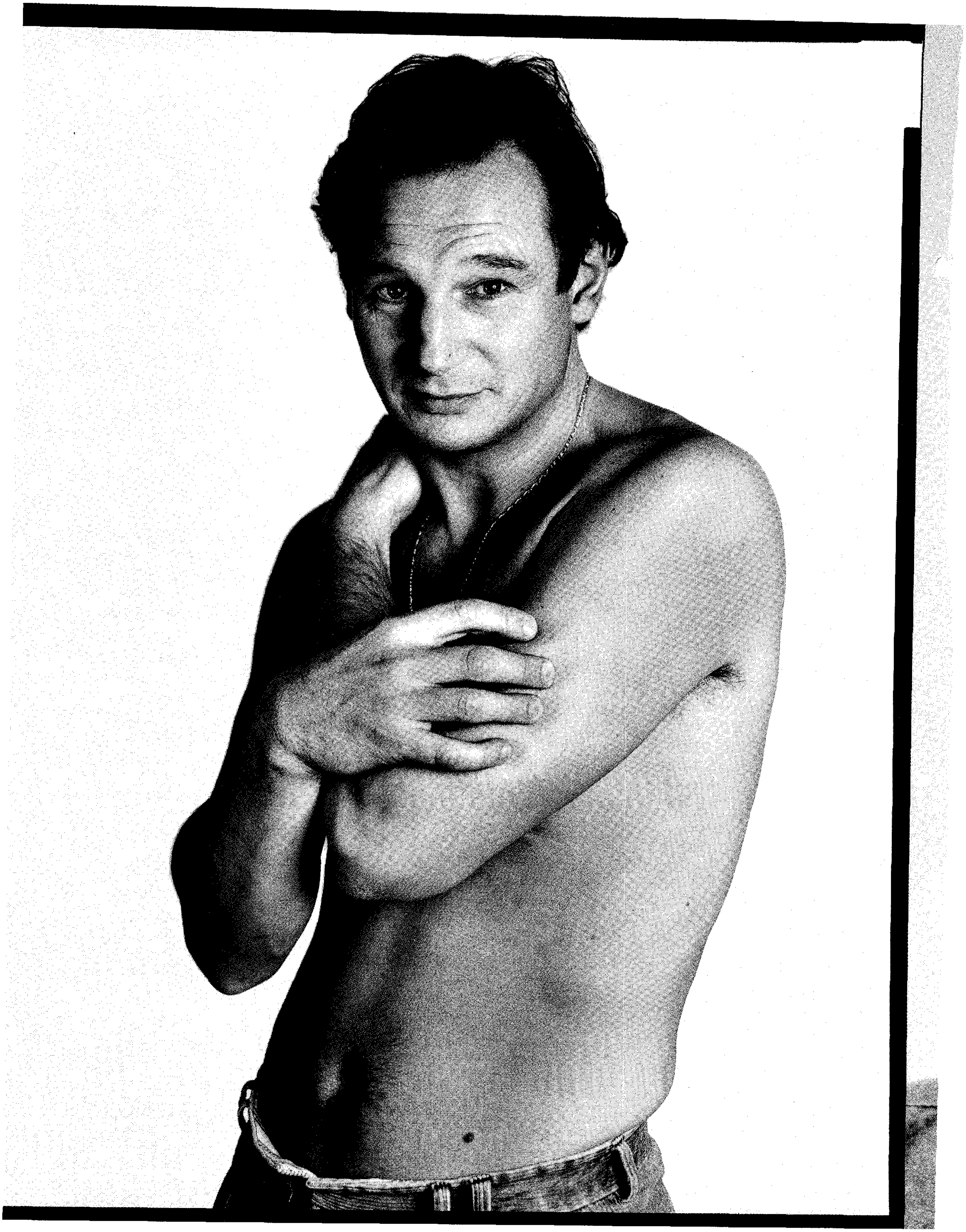
Some six weeks later, I received a midnight telephone plea to join Todd in Hollywood, where he was preparing the Barbary Coast episode and a couple of others in the picture. I complied and, as I expected, was immediately plunged into a courtship unsullied by any hint of money. He urgently needed lines and situations, he confessed, for some exceptional stars he had acquired for cameo roles. I confessed, with equal candor, that I urgently needed bread for my dependents. His eyes took on a glassy, hypnotic stare and he began casting my horoscope. In it he saw yachts the size of the Stella Polaris, racing stables, seraglios full of milk-white lovelies surpassing Jane Russell. Impressed though I was by his clairvoyance, I managed to retain my equilibrium and demanded cash on the barrelhead. He vilified me, rent his garments, and howled aloud, but eventually he consented to a deal on a piecework basis. Nightly in the weeks that followed, therefore, we would meet in a Beverly Hills parking lot, I clutching the pages required for the next day's shooting, he the pro-rata payment. At a concerted signal, we made a lightning exchange, leaped into our respective cars, and drove off.

Five months after the picture had opened and Todd's own picture was appearing on postage stamps, David Niven and I lunched at the Beverly Hills Hotel. As we reviewed the vicissitudes we had undergone in its making, he suddenly interrupted his discourse. "Bless my soul, I almost forgot," he said. "This reunion deserves a special celebration. Waiter—two more Martinis, please!"

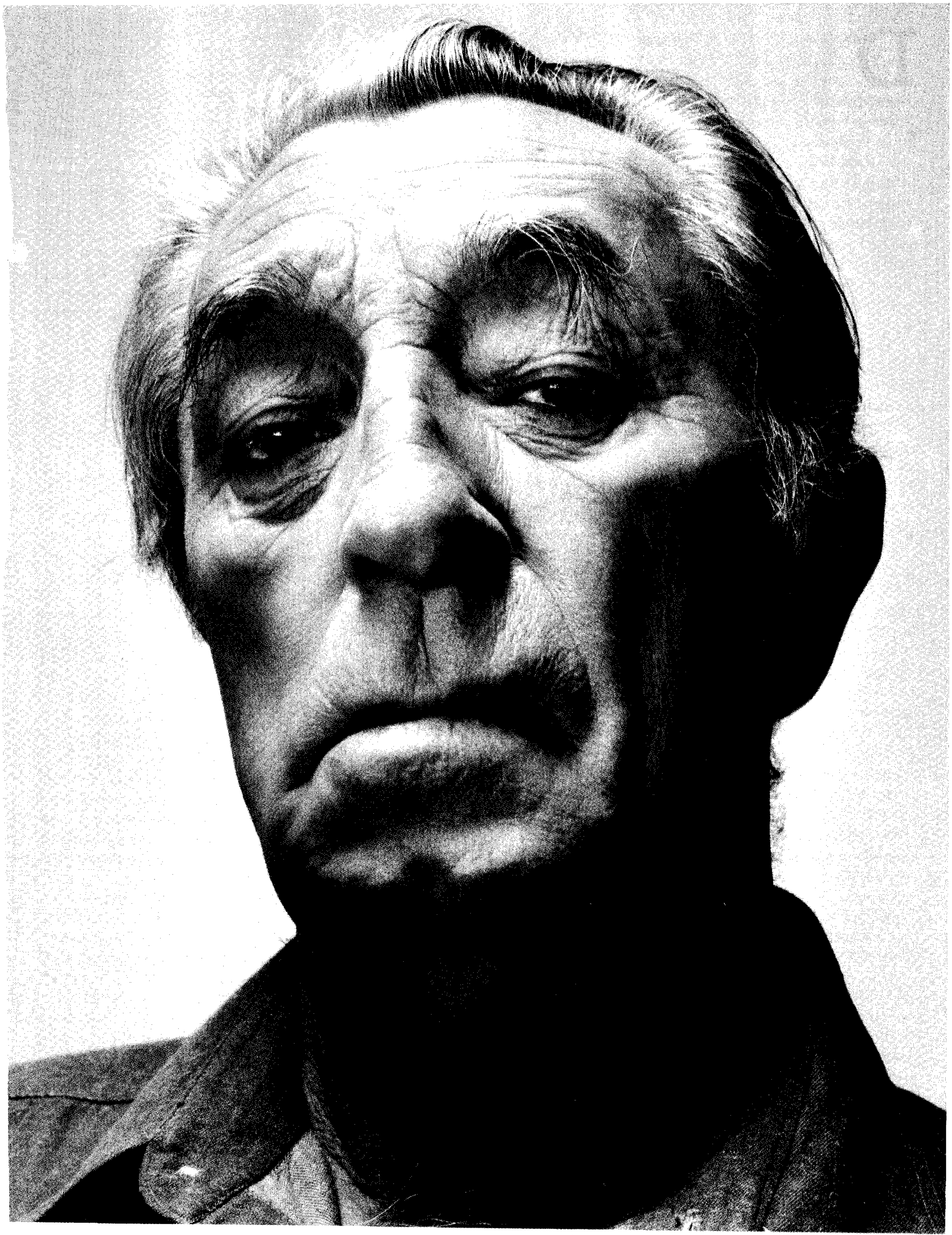
"But why?" I asked.

"Because this just came through yesterday." He withdrew his cardcase and exhibited a check. "My final week's salary for 'Around the World in Eighty Days.' "

The waiter, engaged in removing our empties, grunted sympathetically. "Well do I know the *boychick* of whom you speak," he said. "The fastest con in the West." ♦



SHOWCASE: *Liam Neeson, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, January 24, 1994.*



Robert Mitchum, photographed by Richard Avedon in Montecito, California, January 8, 1994.

ANNALS OF SHOWTOWN

DEVELOPMENT HELL

A veteran explains how the system works—and doesn't work.

BY DAVID BROWN

RICHARD MERKIN

DEVELOPMENT HELL. I first read the term in a movie trade publication. Finally, I had a name for what I, as a producer, had been mired in for the last twenty years.

In Hollywood, "development" is the word used to describe the process of rewriting by which movies are often never made, or, if made, sometimes bear little resemblance to the book, play, or screenplay on which they are supposed to be based. A studio executive is assigned to your project and presents you and the writer with a set of "notes." These usually take the form of an unsigned critique of the script by second- or third-tier executives who are unlikely to have written, produced, or otherwise been involved in the making of a movie. Often, a screenplay (or book, or play) that was originally acquired with much corporate fanfare is now perceived to be a black hole of dramatic problems. The only solution is to make the movie what it isn't or never was—a wholly different story.

For example, "The Cemetery Club," a play I had acquired about three Jewish widows in Queens, was "de-ethnicized" by changing the locale to Pittsburgh. When "A Few Good Men," another of my films, was in development, studio executives suggested that we have the characters (ultimately played by Tom Cruise and Demi Moore) fall into bed with each other. If it hadn't been for the director Rob Reiner, we might well have had to succumb to this suggestion. Reiner correctly decreed that a courtroom drama provided sufficient passion. As for my movieland sendup "The Player," the author, Michael Tolkin, and I were asked by a development executive why the story had to take place in Hollywood. He suggested the steel industry as a replacement. We replaced *him*.

The playwright David Mamet wrote the screenplay for "The Verdict," a courtroom drama that Richard Zanuck and I produced. His first draft lacked one detail: a verdict. Studio executives ordered his removal. Zanuck and I were condemned to Development Hell while writer after writer was engaged, in addition to a couple of directors. Providence intervened in the form of the director Sidney Lumet, who expressed interest in the project *only* if the maligned Mamet script was used. He persuaded Mamet to provide a verdict. The studio development executives were vanquished. Mamet's vision was that "The Verdict" was about redemption, and not money, which the studio would have preferred.

Not all notes are as mindless as those I have cited; most, though, are rather mundane, conventional, and boring, and the adoption of their suggestions would render a script predictable and inert. I deal with them badly except for the occasional brainstorm or sound criticism on the part of a studio reader. Mostly, I kick, scream, and vow to get out of the business, but finally I cave in and make cowardly concessions (intending to dispose of the worst of them after I've enlisted the support of a star and the director).

Ben Hecht, one of early Hollywood's most prolific writers, reflected on his struggles with the development process in his autobiography, "A Child of the Century." "Of the sixty movies I wrote, more than half were written in two weeks or less," he recalled. "I spent more time arguing than writing. . . . My chief memory of movieland is one of asking . . . why I must change the script, eviscerate it, cripple and hamstring it?"

Some moguls, however, were enlightened—Darryl F. Zanuck among them. (D.F.Z. brought—perhaps the operative word is "bought"—me from the magazine world and summoned me to Hollywood in 1951.) His script changes may have helped to win Oscars for the writers he supervised. Zanuck, himself a writer, proclaimed, "They call them moving pictures because they're supposed to move," as he cut away excess dialogue and redundant scenes with a scalpel and sometimes a scythe. He was not always terse. He might dictate pages of notes containing precise suggestions for curing dramatic and dialogue problems. When he liked a script, his notes could be startlingly brief. "Shoot it," he would scribble on such a script.

From Darryl Zanuck's memo to Bryan Foy and Otto Preminger on the first draft of "Laura," dated November 1, 1943 (reprinted in "Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck," edited by Rudy Behlmer): "Laura is a mess. She is neither interesting nor attractive, and I doubt if any first-rate actress would ever play her. As it is now, she seems terribly naïve—a complete sucker. . . . She does no thinking in the picture at all. She has no decisions to make. . . . She just acts as the scenario writer wants her to act."

A Zanuck memo to Elia Kazan and John Steinbeck on the subject of the "Viva Zapata" screenplay, dated December 26, 1950: "I have no objection to killing a leading man or a hero in the last act of a picture. I've even killed Clifton Webb in the last act of his biggest hit, 'Cheaper by the Dozen,' and ended a comedy on a tragic note, but the tragic note had an upbeat to it. It seemed the right and *satisfactory* finish."

This man was a producer. He knew the process intimately. There are few Darryl Zanucks at work today, and, consequently, there are more of us in Development Hell. But good films do get made; they slip through the cracks of the studio system because of luck, the maniacal persistence of the filmmaker, or the derring-do of scantily financed independent distributors. In recent years, most and sometimes all films nominated for Academy Awards have not been developed within the studios. As a result, some independent filmmakers, Merchant Ivory among them, have been signed by major companies with assurances of no "creative interference"—development, that is. ♦

ELEMENTS OF FILM

THE VOODOO OF GLAMOUR

Probably no culture has been as thoroughly analyzed as Hollywood, but one mystery remains: why are we still so spellbound by its stars?

BY JOHN LAHR

FILM glamour conjures in the flesh the movies' dream of a happy ending. "Glamour is the glorious moment continued and absorbed into personality," the director Mike Nichols says. "In that sense, it's in defiance of time and death. Whatever glamour is, it is to make up for something that isn't there—either anymore or at all." Another director, Billy Wilder, says that the spell of stars is the spell of "the absolutely exceptional person, not the ordinary somebody," and he adds, "They had to appear as a super-person at all times. They looked as if they were thought up by a magnificent painter or sculptor. Glamour is in attitude. It is also in their means of transportation. They're not walking, you know. They are being driven."

Glamour, a word whose strange root is a Scottish alteration of "grammar," is a syntax of seeming and enchantment, and, like all enchantments, it never quite reveals its mysteries. It thrives on detachment and elusiveness. Rita Hayworth poised to descend the staircase in "Cover Girl"; Marlene Dietrich, in black stockings and bustier, perched on a stool in "The Blue Angel"; Greta Garbo, the wind whipping her hair, standing on a ship's bow in "Queen Christina"; Marlon Brando taking off his bowling shirt in "A Streetcar Named Desire"—the exaggerated lines of each "look," in whatever generation, excite in us deep, heart-stopping feeling. "Glamour is bringing art to life, using the principles of art—stylization, emphasis and deëmphasis of certain aspects of the surface," Mike Nichols continues. "Glamour is a series of decisions. Things done and worn and said that add to someone's natural gifts. Dietrich, for instance, made not only physical decisions but decisions about behavior. She never complained. She never looked in the mirror. She never touched any part of herself. She cleaned up even in *your* house. This was an act to avoid the apparent hell of self-consideration."

The glamorous, we come to realize, are built for worship, and what we get in exchange for our adulation is a stage-managed sense of blessing and authority. Perfectly made, potently endowed, they offer us the illusion of a world beyond harm. Ease is the climate of their simulated invincibility. "The final artifice," Mike Nichols says, "is making it seem there's nothing to it." This dissimulation is not about essence but about performance. "It's a resignation to performance," Nichols says. "If you live in a glamorous way or become a glamorous person, what you're doing is sacrificing being for seeming. The first thing you check at the gate and give up forever is spontaneity." Glamour makes a spectacle of fulfillment—the individual at once perfectly "composed" and perfectly "realized." Audrey Hepburn's smiling eyes, Cyd Charisse's legs, Marilyn Monroe's open mouth become iconic fragments, which focus our longing for the perfectible.

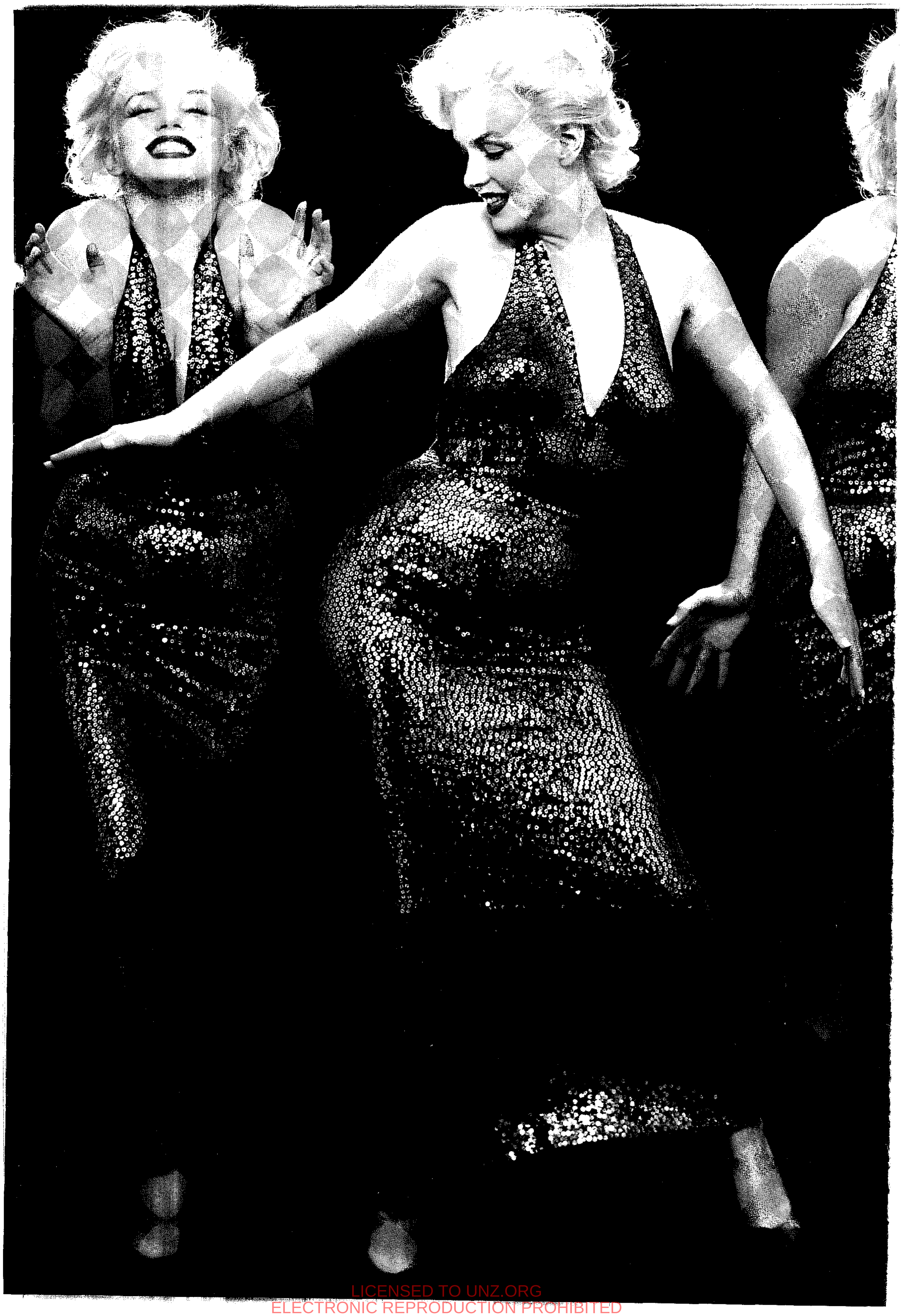
Glamour saturates our landscape, leaving us to struggle against the omnipresent tug of the ideal. We encounter glamour in advertisements, on billboards, in magazines, and occasionally even in the flesh, but for most of us glamour's first and strongest reality has always been on film. At their dashing best, in their moment, the kings and queens of the movies define our moment. Their history becomes our history. We read about them, we talk about them, we listen to them, we even dream about them. How did they arrive unbidden? Why did they stay in our imagination?

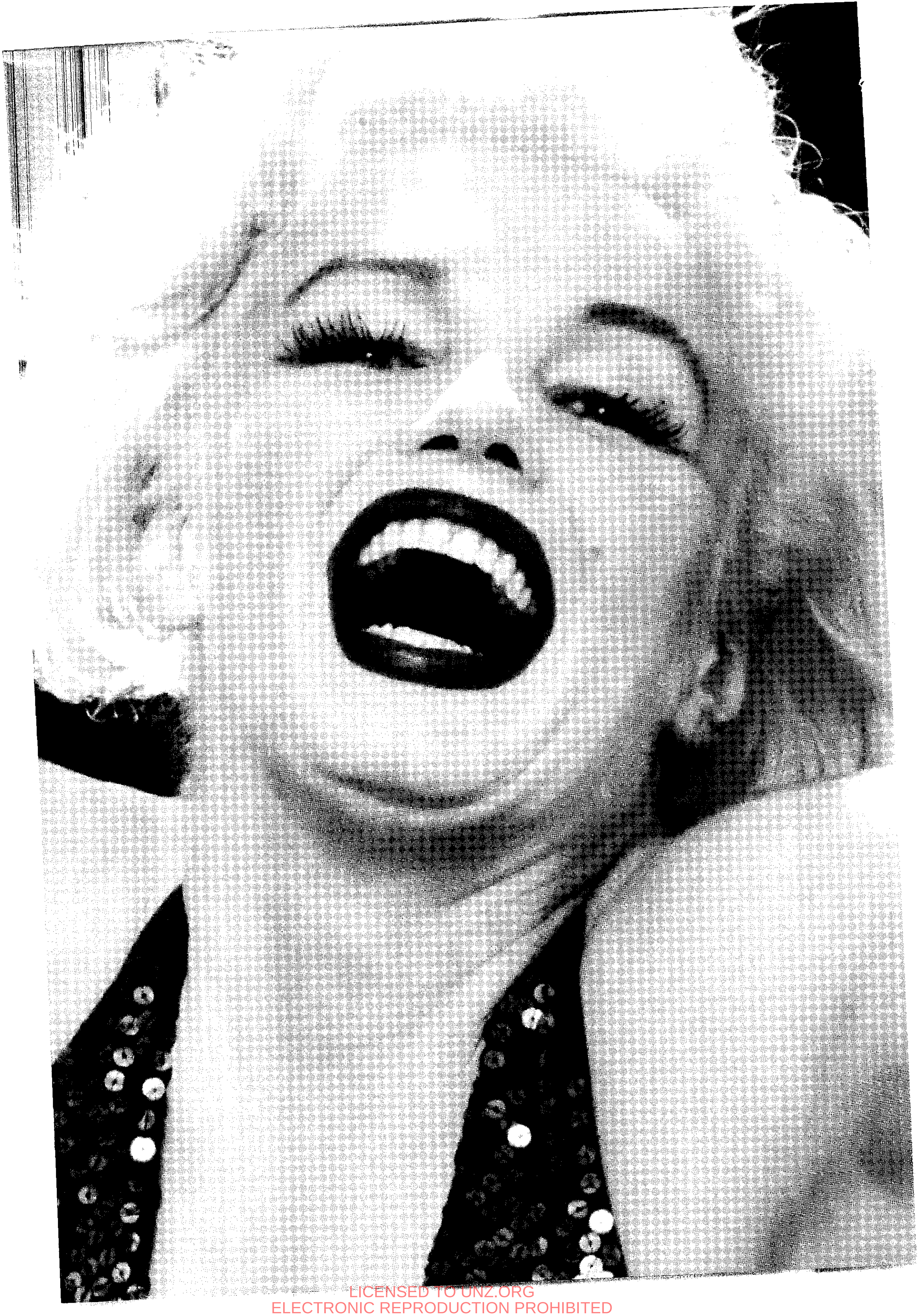
"It's witchcraft, baby," says Sharon Stone, the movies' current high priestess of glamour. "Chills up and down your spine." We know at once what she means, even from our own unimaginably distant remove. "Look at how many ugly people there are in the world," Marlene Dietrich is reported to have said to her daughter, surveying a dishevelled mass at an airport. "No wonder they pay *us* so much money."

How willingly we in that mass seize upon the glamorous as exemplars; and how eagerly we strive to emulate them. Part of glamour's magic is its power to bypass life's dangers and humiliations. Again and again, the screen acts out this same drama: Marlene Dietrich taking off her high heels and setting off into the desert to follow Gary Cooper in the last beat of "Morocco"; Audrey Hepburn, transformed from urchin to belle of the ball, finessing the English aristocracy in "My Fair Lady"; Barbara Stanwyck turning the judgmental local worthies to jelly in "The Lady Eve"; and so on.

The same disarming thing can happen when glamorous stars turn up in everyday life. I've seen grown men throw down their coats for Dietrich to walk on; I've seen Jean Shrimpton stop traffic as she crossed a London street; and I've seen Tuesday Weld send Miss Harris's Dance Class, in New York City in 1959, into disarray as all the young gentlemen (including me) left our partners stranded on the dance floor to queue up for a few seconds in her arms. Glamour agitates as it ravishes. It creates a climate of want. Film glamour encouraged the American notion of pluck and luck—the notion that "it's worth sweating it out to reach this kind of point where you have a private yacht," according to Billy Wilder. "People worked harder. They saved their money so they could have a dress like Jean Harlow's or a double-breasted suit like Adolphe Menjou's, to wear on the wrong occasion." Glamour's excitement embraces a contradiction: an enchantment that's a kind of slavery; a projection of authority that inspires inadequacy. The playwright and movie glamour boy Sam Shepard sets out the seduction and abrasion of this spell in his play about the Hollywood film community, "Angel City" (1976). In one scene, a producer's secretary charts the spellbound's landscape of unfreedom:

> I look at the screen and I am the screen. I'm not me. I don't know who I am. I look at the movie and I am the movie. I am the star. I am the star in the movie. For days I am the star and I'm not me. I'm me being the star. I look at my life when I come down. I look and I hate my life when I





come down. I hate my life not being a movie. I hate my life not being a star. I hate being myself in my life which isn't a movie and never will be.

FROM the moment Adolph Zukor wrote the words "Famous Players in Famous Plays" on the back of an envelope, in 1910, thus conceiving one of Hollywood's earliest motion-picture companies, glamour married two things close to the producers' hearts: profits and prestige. Glamour embodied the refinement that the crude immigrant *hondlers* who pioneered the industry sought even more eagerly than money. Refugees from the fur, rag, scrap-metal, and glove trades, they gave up their dreams of conventional business to go into the unconventional business of dreams, which offered them a quicker way to wrap themselves in America and in respectability. "All I really like, all I care about, is class," said Sam Goldwyn.

Jesse Lasky echoed these upwardly mobile sentiments, saying, "I yearned to trespass on Quality Street"; and when, on his deathbed, he was asked to state his religion, he answered, "American." If the blessings of American abundance and individualism needed a visual correlative, screen glamour was it: an act of prestidigitation that dramatized the magical possibilities of the nation and kept alive the promise of promise itself. The striving for exemplary standards was carried to its apogee by Louis B. Mayer, who commandeered July 4th as his birthday, and whose company, M-G-M, cultivated, in his words, "beautiful pictures for beautiful people." Joan Crawford, recalling one of her run-ins with Mayer, said, "I came to the studio very well dressed (I thought) in slacks with my hair back and a scarf around it. He took one look at me, turned absolutely red, and told me to go back home and dress the way a star should be in public, and to never appear looking the way 'just any woman' would." At the end of her life, Crawford cast an understandably cold eye on the film colony's quest for refinement. "That's a laugh, by the way, the film society," Roy Newquist records her saying in his "Conversations with Joan Crawford." "For all their money they barely know how to pick up the right fork. In fact, a lot of them *don't* know how. Ever had dinner with Louis B. or Jack Warner? They should have had troughs."

The moguls, like the stars they manufactured, turned the symbols of refinement into a way of being. Mayer bred racehorses. Goldwyn collected fine art and played croquet. William Fox played golf. Nine times a year, the Mayfair Club, nicknamed the Hollywood Four Hundred, met at the Biltmore Hotel and aped East Coast high-society galas, the women in ball gowns, the men in white tie, top hat, and tails. Inevitably, the images of elegance that the moguls sought to project on film were distinctly Gentile. The men (Gable, Colman, Powell, Fairbanks, Grant, Flynn) were well spoken and well turned out, dressed the way the moguls *thought* the English gentry dressed—in pristine tweeds and cutaways. The women—the fine-boned, straight-nosed, alabaster women—were groomed to look like scrubbed, golden shiksa thoroughbreds. They were often renamed to banish any unseemly hint of ethnicity: Margarita Carmen Cansino became Rita Hayworth; Lucille LeSueur became Joan Crawford; Betty Joan Perske became Lauren Bacall.

"Once you were an M-G-M star, that's the way it was," Myrna Loy said in her autobiography. "It helped to have talent, of course, but that constant saturation created this legendary kind of thing. We couldn't help becoming legends."

By constant reiteration of glamorous images, movies taught faith both in individualism and in consumption. They seemed able to persuade people to do almost anything in order to acquire something like a film "look"—pad their shoulders, shave off their eyebrows, dye their hair some amazing new tint. "Platinum blond," a term invented by Hollywood publicists, inspired the sudden and spectacular success of Jean Harlow in "Hell's Angels" (1930). Photographing Harlow on the set of "Red Dust" (1932), M-G-M's famous studio photographer Clarence Bull appropriated a small surgeon's lamp from a nearby set and turned the beam on Harlow's famous platinum locks. "I knew the prints would be perfect," he said. "Jean's hair glowed, and afterwards she hugged and kissed me breathless." Bull nicknamed the light Harlow's Halo. Before 1931, most beauty shops had refused to bleach hair, but after Harlow's success, according to her biographer, "beauty parlors in every major city were overwhelmed, as tens of thousands of women demanded platinum." In more than a hundred cities, "platinum-blond clubs" were started. Even some established stars—Crawford, Davis, West, Lombard—copied her and went blond.

Richard Avedon, whose photographs bear witness to the heaven and the hell of individuality, says "Glamour is the appearance of the possibility of achievement." He goes on, "Nobody can ever become Sir Isaiah Berlin by buying it around the corner at the supermarket. But you can buy the lipstick of the stars, the dress of the stars. Glamour is the belief in the possibility of salvation through magic." Glamour redeems the stars from their ordinariness, and co-opts religious terminology to convey its extraordinary effect—not just "halo" but "goddess," "god," "divine," "divinity," "immortal," "immaculate," "sublime." "More stars than there are in heaven," M-G-M ballyhooed. Producers in the business of manufacturing godheads often had to struggle with recalcitrant mortal material. "Unless we can bring off our photography so that she really looks divine," David O. Selznick wrote about his star for "Intermezzo," Ingrid Bergman, "the whole picture can fall apart from a standpoint of audience effectiveness." Selznick spelled out the "proper photography" of Bergman to the cameraman, Gregg Toland; it was based "not simply on avoiding the bad side of her face; keeping her head down as much as possible; giving her the proper hairdress, giving her the proper mouth make-up, avoiding long shots, so as not to make her look too big . . . but most important of all, on shading her face and in invariably going for effect lightings on her."

The focus of adoration was, first and foremost, the face. "They don't need an

Preceding pages: Marilyn Monroe, in New York City, May 6, 1957

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AVEDON

actress here," moaned Luise Rainer, the actress who collected two Academy Awards in the late thirties, before leaving Hollywood. "What they need and want is a face and the camera to go around it." She wasn't wrong. "You had to see the face, you know," Mary Astor wrote in her sprightly memoir, "A Life on Film." "You *had* to see the face, the trademark, with *its* trademark: Mary Pickford's dimples, Doug's grin, Erich von Stroheim's monocle, Mae Murray's pout. A cameraman had taught me the value of a small 'eyelight' for close-ups which would put stars in your eyes. The face, the gimmicks, the appearance took the place of genuine emotion." When a beautiful face was combined with a particular sense of detachment, you got the mystery that made stars into legends. Dietrich, writing to her husband about a romantic moment in "Morocco," said that von Sternberg "shot it in close-up, the longest one I have ever seen, and around the Studio they are saying it is the sexiest come-hither look that's ever been filmed. Jo knew so well how the face would photograph, how those long eyelids would look. When I saw it in the rushes, I thought that it was the ultimate of sex. But if while you are seeing it, you know that I'm counting one, two, three—it can be very funny!"

Some actresses didn't get the joke. "I never go out on the street unless I expect and anticipate and hope and pray that I'll be recognized. That someone'll ask for my autograph," Joan Crawford said in 1972. "When they do, I'm prepared and ready and as well-dressed as I possibly can be. And when somebody says 'There's Joan Crawford,' I say, 'It sure is!' And I'm very happy about it!" For stars to shine, there had to be someone on hand to reflect them. "Arriving Monday with the Marquis," Gloria Swanson is reported to have wired Adolph Zukor as she was returning from Europe after marrying into the French aristocracy, in 1925. "Arrange ovation."

"Glamour's practitioners are paralyzing when they meet life," Mike Nichols says. "A girl I know once ran up to me as I entered a party and said, 'Frank Sinatra's here! What should I do?' " Richard Avedon told me that he likes the word "obliterating" in this context. "Glamour gets rid of you," he went on. "It doesn't invite you in. You have to kneel before it. You have to admire. You have to gasp. You can't go up there and grab it. The closest you get is a ringside table."

Glamour's lethal effect on the psyche is also caught in the language that commonly describes its impact: "dressed to kill," "devastating," "shattering," "stunning," "knockout," "to die." Perhaps it's not surprising that Rita Hayworth's famous pinup pose in which she's kneeling in a silk negligee on satin sheets was taped to the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

WHEN Hayworth left Columbia Pictures, in the mid-fifties, her boss, the famously unpleasant studio head Harry Cohn, said, "So we don't have another dame with big boobs on the lot. So what? We ain't got a star? We'll make one!" He didn't know it, but making glamorous stars would never be that easy again, for television had already begun its merciless inroads on filmgoing audiences, and Hollywood glamour would never fully regain its purchase on the public imagination. Materialized fantasy, once primarily the property of Hollywood, began to appear in other mass-produced objects, while film glamour was retooled to match the bright, optimistic, populuxe outline of a decade that saw the rise of the tail fin and the Barbie doll. Films began to manufacture their own version of plastic sex dolls (Mamie Van Doren, Jayne Mansfield, Sheree North, Connie Stevens) and, in a tranquillized era, turned out stars with no shadow (Debbie Reynolds, Doris Day, Sandra Dee, Rock Hudson, Troy Donahue, Tab Hunter). Even Marilyn Monroe, the last hurrah of the old glamour, purveyed an unpredatory sexuality—part vamp, part victim—that appealed equally to men and to women.

Television stimulated in the public an appetite for the "real" instead of the "artificial," and over the decades glamour has shifted from the illusion of refinement to the illusion of naturalness. "Glamour is by definition artificial. The new artificiality is 'I am real, I suffer,' " Richard Avedon said. "I mean it would be absurd to photograph Meryl Streep or Anjelica Huston over the couch with 'her light.' They'd be embarrassed, because the new artifice is 'I'm real. You photograph me *real*, warts and all. But not too many warts.' You take the real warts out, but you leave the illusion that you didn't have a world-famous photographer and cinematographer making you look real."

For Avedon, the film image that changed screen glamour was Silvana Mangano standing in the rice fields in Giuseppe De Santis's neorealist "Bitter Rice," made in 1949. "A world opened up, and another one was destroyed," he says. "Wet hair. No makeup. Legs apart. Powerful. The real thing. That wiped the likes of Rosalind Russell off the map. The definition of glamour shifts from period to period, because everybody gets bored. In the twenties, the erotic emphasis was legs. Clara Bow. Knees and legs and how they used their legs. Wildness. Things got released in the knees and legs. Compare Lartigue's pictures of women at the turn of the century walking in the Bois de Boulogne in long skirts with his twenties portrait of his wife, Bibi, sitting on the loo. In the thirties, it went from the legs to the eyes. Garbo, Dietrich, Crawford—all eyes. Next came Marilyn Monroe, and the focus shifted to the mouth. Marilyn never closed her mouth. A lot of girls had great laughs, but she took it to the furthest point, so that it became iconic—the gasping mouth, the laughing mouth, the open mouth, which represented the possibility of pleasure.

"In the sixties and seventies, it was the body, which came with the sexual revolution. Jane Fonda in 'Barbarella,' and Raquel Welch. The sixties and seventies left nothing to the imagination. If you skip to Madonna, who is perceived as a glamour girl, something is happening in the culture that never happened before—a culture of cruelty."

One way to kill the pressure of glamour's spell (as Madonna knows) is to mock it, creating an anti-glamour, whose frivolity simultaneously celebrates and mourns the decline of Hollywood and of the public's faith in glamour. Andy Warhol deconstructed some enduring images by reworking Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, Elizabeth Taylor, and Elvis Presley. "Just run one of these on every page," Warhol's right-hand man told the editor of *inter/VIEW*, handing him glamour shots of Rita Hayworth. "It doesn't matter if they go with the articles or not." Warhol, the Business Artist, understood film glamour's commercial magic. If the old glamour boldly pointed out the depths, Warhol's new glamour hinted at shallows. "The more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel," he said. Emptiness itself was a defense against unacceptable feelings of envy. Hollywood glamour hid loss; Warhol's version of glamour celebrated it. Even Hollywood's axiom of entertainment was turned on its head. "Always leave them wanting less," Warhol said.

I CAN'T recall a time when Hollywood glamour hasn't figured, one way or another, in my own life. When I was a child, my father, Bert Lahr, sold the California house in which I was born to Betty Grable. I am told, but don't remember, that Rita Hayworth dandled me on her knee. I do remember seeing Jennifer Jones pick up her kids from my kindergarten and, some years later, seeing a whole bevy of glamour-pusses—Ava Gardner, Anne Jeffreys, Joan Blondell—diving for gold prize balloons (a trip to Bermuda, a year's supply of Morton Downey soap) on the Stork Club dance floor at Easter. Greta Garbo once handed me back a baseball that had rolled under the Central Park bench on which she was sitting. Is movie glamour dead? I open the newspaper, and Jean-Paul Gaultier's new Paris collection is a reworking of the forties Betty Grable look. I go into a bookstore, and all I see is Marilyn Monroe biographies and posters. I glance at *Vogue*, and Sharon Stone "evoking Carole Lombard-style glamour" stares back at me. "The public reinterprets and reinvents you perpetually," Stone once told me. "We're a combination of a cultural memory and a current situation."

We go backward into the future, and we carry with us a whole iconography of longing, which keeps us, for better or worse, both unsettled and still wrapped in an adolescent daydream of having everything all the time. In America's obsessive redefining of its identity—an unhappiness reflected in the need to search and to suffer for a better self—screen glamour, however much altered and diluted, continues to play an extraordinary and somehow heartbreaking role. ♦

ANNALS OF SHOWTOWN

THE JOEL SILVER SHOW

The leader of the "whammo" school of filmmaking has now floated the Coen brothers' "Hudsucker Proxy." Is he Hollywood's id, or its most passionate producer?

BY MARK SINGER

INEXPLICABLY, the two-hour version of the life story of the movie producer Joel Silver—a fable-without-a-moral action farce that, ideally, would evoke aspects of "The Last Tycoon," "The Court Jester," "Citizen Kane," and "The Nutty Professor"—has yet to be optioned by Hollywood. Meanwhile, incomplete glimpses of a Silver-like creature have been turning up on television and movie screens for more than a decade. On "SCTV Network," during the early eighties, the actor Rick Moranis invented a curly-haired, dark-bearded, bespectacled, paunchy, hyperkinetic showbiz hustler named Larry Siegel who, while seated, would shimmy his knees in rhythm with his voluble high-speed palaver and, while standing, would windmill his arms in the face of whomever he was shouting at, occasionally pausing to reach deep into his pocket to check things out. Moranis, who professes great affection for Silver, recalls that Larry Siegel sprang to life after "I went directly from a meeting in Joel's office and headed straight to the writing room." In a 1986 movie called "Head Office," a spoof of American corporate drudgery, Moranis, inspired by having observed Silver on the telephone, portrayed a frenetic executive who tells his secretary to put his wife on hold—she's calling from the hospital, where her father has just died—while he takes a call from his Mercedes mechanic, and who not long thereafter dies of a heart attack himself.

The filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen have denied that Jack Lipnick, who is the studio boss in "Barton Fink," their dark satire of Hollywood in the thirties, owes any debt to Silver. This denial is contrary to a perception that Silver labored under for some time. As Lipnick, the actor Michael Lerner somehow manages to create an original character while replicating with eerie accuracy Silver's diction, posture, and gesticulations. Lipnick is the engine of a plot in which Fink, a lugubrious social-realist playwright who yearns to "create a theatre for the masses based on a few simple truths," is bullied into writing a wrestling picture starring Wallace Beery. In the spring of 1992, the Coen brothers met with Silver in New York to discuss the film "The Hudsucker Proxy," which at that point existed only as a screenplay that, in frustration, they were thinking of shelving. Thanks in large measure to Silver, "The Hudsucker Proxy," a Sturges-like screwball comedy, has just opened in theatres around the country. Joel Coen recalls that at this first meeting Silver said, deadpan, "I loved that character Lipnick. I know you don't believe this, but there are actually people like that still out there in Hollywood." Working with Silver on "Hudsucker," the Coen brothers happily insist, "could not have been a more un-Lipnick experience."

In "I'll Do Anything," the new James L. Brooks comedy, Albert Brooks appears as Burke Adler, a philistine whose production company is called Popcorn Pictures—an echo of a widely circulated remark of Silver's that "the movies I make are popcorn movies, as opposed to cappuccino movies." In the waiting room at Popcorn Pictures is a "Terminator 2" video game; in the waiting room at Silver Pictures, which occupies a bungalow on the Warner Bros. lot, in Burbank, California, there is a "Joel Silver" pinball machine.

By far the most mordant rendering of Silver turned up in Lawrence Kasdan's 1991 drama "Grand Canyon." A producer named Davis, played by Steve Martin, drives a red sports car with a vanity license tag that says "GRSS PTS," his reward for concocting action movies that have marinated in adrenaline, testosterone, and blood. Silver's own credits include "Lethal Weapon" and its two sequels; "48 Hrs."; "Die Hard" and "Die Hard 2: Die Harder"; "Commando"; "Predator" and "Predator 2"; "Action

Jackson"; "The Last Boy Scout"; "Hudson Hawk"; "Road House"; "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane"; "Ricochet"; and "Demolition Man." During a scene inside a screening room, Davis berates a film editor, saying, "You took out the shot! . . . The *money* shot! Bus driver's head. The brains-on-the-window shot. The viscera-on-the-visor shot." After being wounded and crippled during a street robbery, Davis experiences a profound existential vision and vows to dedicate himself to making "stories about life, the life force, the creation of life, the very instinct for living." Later, however, he changes his mind: "Oh, fuck that. . . . I regained my senses. . . . Nobody in this town will admit that a producer is an artist. But I know what I do. . . . You think just anyone can do what I do? You think anyone can make the crap I make? . . . There's always been violence. There will always be violence. Violence and evil and men with big guns. My movies reflect what's going on. They don't make what's going on. And if I happen to make them better than anyone, then I've got a bigger responsibility than anyone to serve it up."

"Grand Canyon" offended Silver. When I asked him about it, he said, "I thought it was ludicrous. I don't want to be caricatured." On the other hand, when I asked him about a long-stemmed gilded lily that ascends from a crystal vase on his desk he said, "I believe in underscoring the obvious. So on my desk is a gilded lily. A real gilded lily."

Silver likes to quote an axiom that he attributes to Dore Schary—"A movie is either a success or a failure at its inception"—and then quote his own, updated corollary: "The movie business has become a binary business. A movie is either a one or a zero. Either it works or it doesn't work. There are no dimmer switches. Either it is or it isn't." In Hollywood, the mention of Silver's name elicits parallel responses—no waffling, no middle of the road. Robert Friedman, the president of worldwide advertising publicity for Warner Bros., has said, "There are no hidden agendas with Joel. He's totally up front. He doesn't pull punches. He tells it like it is. Either you like it or you don't like it."

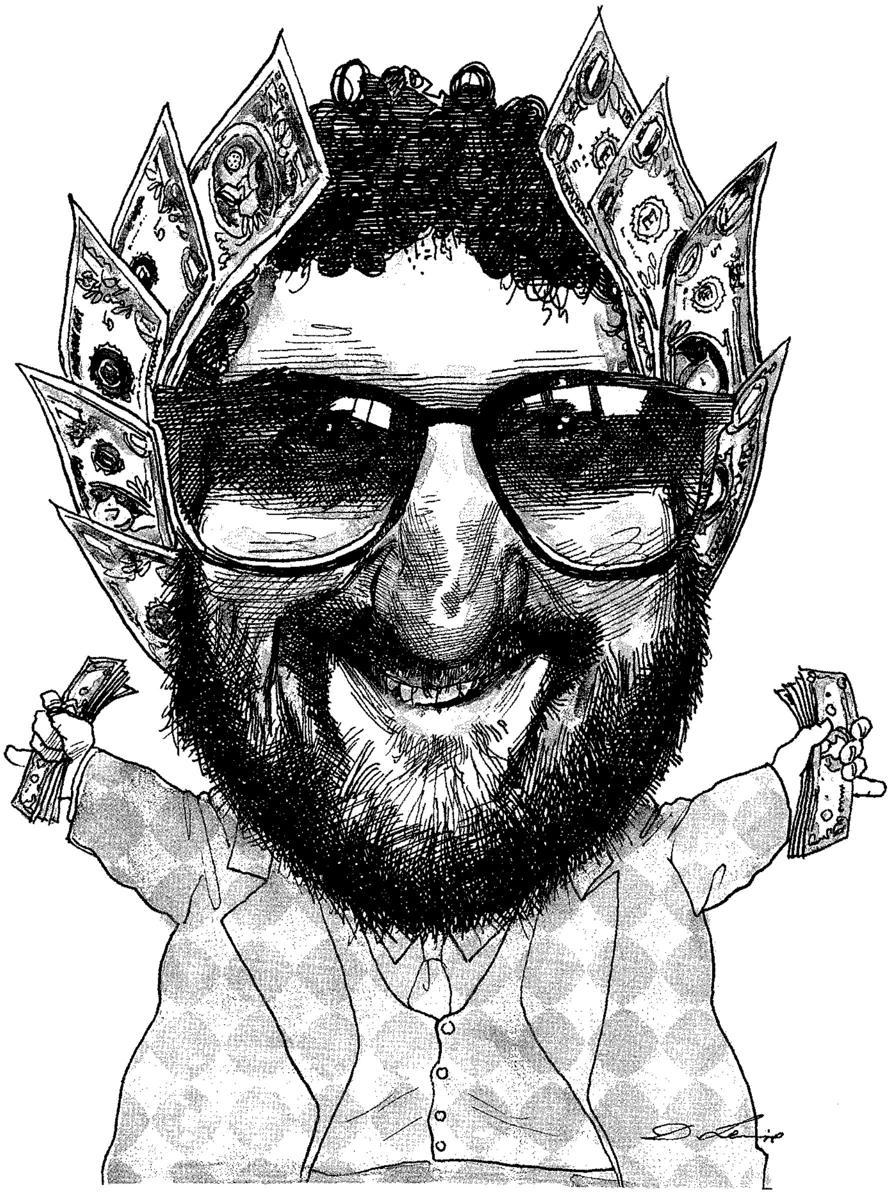
Ron Meyer, the president of the Creative Artists Agency, recently described Silver as "the most misunderstood person in this business," and went on to say, "He can give the first impression of being very abrupt and unfocussed, when in fact he's tremendously focussed. He doesn't approach anything that has to do with the making of movies in a casual manner. He doesn't do anything in his life casually."

Daniel Waters, a screenwriter who worked with Silver on "Ford Fairlane," "Hudson Hawk," and "Demolition Man," told me, "Joel is used as a barometer of morality and everything else out here. Every meeting I go to, there's a remark like 'At least I'm not as *blank* as Joel Silver'—'extravagant,' 'sexist,' 'violent,' 'immoral.' If you hear this enough times—that he's the id of Hollywood, he's the line you don't want to cross—then, from my perspective, he becomes the guy you *want* to work with. I hate it when people call 'Hudson Hawk' one of the worst movies ever made. They just haven't seen enough movies. I always think of Joel as a wartime general who's not above starting his own war to keep things interesting."

Silver is on the phone and at his wit's end. He is having a disagreement with an agent whom he views as obstructionist to the point of stupidity. "You are an *agent*," he says in exasperation. "You've got a responsibility to a *client*. You have to *deal* with this issue." Getting nowhere, he appears to change his tack. "Do me a favor," he says to the agent. "Just ask me, 'Do you want that in a pump or a flat?' "

"What?" the agent says.

"Just say it. Say that line—'Do


Silver: "What are our films about? Our films are about asses on seats."

DAVID LEVINE

COLLABORATIONS

PAUL SCHRADER ON MARTIN SCORSESE

I MET Martin Scorsese in the fall of 1972 in Los Angeles. I was free-lancing for various underground publications (having been fired from the Los Angeles *Free Press* for panning "Easy Rider"); Marty was editing "Mean Streets." Jay Cocks introduced me to Brian De Palma, who introduced me to Scorsese. Brian was living on Nicholas Beach and Scorsese would drop by. While playing chess with Brian one day, I mentioned that I had written a script called "Taxi Driver." He read it, liked it, and passed it on to the producers Michael and Julia Phillips, who lived up the beach. After seeing a rough cut of "Mean Streets," Julia and I thought Scorsese and Robert De Niro were perfect for the script. So did Marty and Bobby. All well and good—except no one would finance it.

Cut, as they say, to three years later. The Phillipses had had a success ("The Sting"), Scorsese had had a success ("Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"), De Niro had had a success ("The Godfather, Part II"), and I had sold a high-priced script ("The Yakuza"). The "Taxi Driver" script had been rejected two and three times over. The common reaction was "This is a terrific script, somebody should make it—but not us." Finally, the Columbia executive David Begelman, who was a friend of Julia's, financed the film. That was a different time. No studio would finance such a project today.

The essence of my collaboration with Marty was this: we approached a shared core from different directions. We are both quite moral. We believe decisions have consequences. There is right, there is wrong, and, in the end, there is a price to pay. His background is urban, New York, Italian, Roman Catholic; mine is rural, Midwest, Dutch, Protestant. We were just enough similar, just enough different to be good for each other. The friction created more light than heat.

Marty never stood over my shoulder when I wrote, I never went on the set when he directed. Ours was an adversarial collaboration. I sought, in conversation and on the page, to "threaten" Scorsese, to force him to defend himself. The measure of my success as a screenwriter was Scorsese's ability to transform my attacks. In addition, it was my task to supply a simple structure and a rock-solid theme. Marty is wont to elaborate on a scene—improvise dialogue, expand the action. The script has to be a bible. In the editing room, he needed to know why a certain scene was where it was, what its function was, why it was *x* pages long.

I've written these comments in the past tense. Marty and I haven't collaborated in ten years. These adversarial collaborations are fun when you're starting out, but they don't wear so well in middle age. We attempted several years ago, with De Niro, to devise a semi-autobiographical update of "The Bad and the Beautiful." Several meetings and a treatment later, we found ourselves like three bulls in a china shop. It was clear there would be a movie and no friendship or no movie and a friendship. We decided to save the friendship.

Scorsese has said of the three films we did together that "Taxi Driver" is more mine, "Raging Bull" is more De Niro's, and "The Last Temptation of Christ" is more his. I think that's fair and generous. I wish every screenwriter could have a director like Scorsese. ♦

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you want that in a pump or a flat?' "

"Why?"

" 'Do you want that in a pump or a flat?' Come on. Say it."

At last, the agent obliges: "Do you want that in a pump or a flat?"

"*Perfect!*" Silver explodes. "Remember that line! Burn that into your brain! Because that's all you're gonna be saying for the rest of your life, you dumb son of a bitch. That's what you should be doing for a living—selling shoes!"

Invariably, in conversations with Silver admirers and detractors alike, the observation gets made that he is the soul of the old Hollywood reconstituted in the body—and the exigencies—of the new Hollywood. He combines an encyclopedic grasp of the history of Hollywood movies with an equally firm grasp of the history and evolution of Hollywood as a business and a state of mind. He is a born *tumler*, a natural storyteller, a recycler of well-burnished anecdotes, and a source of new ones. The words "legend" and "legendary" come up. He is "a living legend," "a legend in his own time," "a legend in his own mind," "a legend ahead of his time," "a throwback to the legendary figures" Thalberg, Cohn, Mayer, Goldwyn, Selznick, Zanuck.

Stuart Baird, a respected film editor whose credits include half a dozen Joel Silver movies, has said, "He's one of those persons who consume the entire room. He breathes more oxygen than anyone else. In order to avoid being swamped, one has to meet that largeness with an equal determination. We've had some big fights in the cutting room, but it's just a way of working. Some people find his explosive personality very difficult to work with. But if you're a professional and you've got good points he'll concede. The most difficult part of making a picture is getting it started, and Joel has proved he can do that. And, ultimately, Joel is there everywhere. He's involving himself every day, dealing with everyday problems. He has the ability to cope with the stars—all the difficulties that might come up—as well as to make sure that the picture is as big as he wants it to be. We're not making an auteur picture, we're making a commercial picture for an audience. We'll do anything that will make a picture work better for an audience. Joel loves being on the dubbing stage. Most producers don't intimately understand the process of making a film.

He understands it extremely well. He loves the process, he lives the process. He expects *his* vision to come across: the script, the production design, the sound, the costumes, the music—everything."

More than one friend of Silver's told me that he never drinks and has never used drugs—not even during the sixties and seventies. I asked Silver about this and he said, "Let's face it, I'm a fanatic about control. I don't even want to *discuss* the notion of losing control. Sleep is enough of a loss of control for me."

When I had spent only a brief time with Silver, it became evident that if I were willing to step aside he would gladly interrupt his other work to produce this article himself. Most mortals are temperamentally and metabolically unsuited to resisting his powers of persuasion. At one point, when my energy reserves were depleted, he coerced me and Sylvester Stallone, against our wishes and best instincts, into a ten-minute telephone conversation. Not out of any antipathy toward Stallone, whom I regard as a masterly artist and a tower of humility, I dreaded the prospect of this conversation. And yet I was rewarded. Sly informed me that Silver is "insane, with long horrible fits of sanity." He also compared Silver to "a fighter pilot who's riding passenger in a Piper Cub," and explained, "As soon as you hit a little bit of turbulence, he's right away going to move the guy out the window and take over the steering. He's very good at that." Several times, Silver urged me to call and solicit a quote from his good friend S. I. Newhouse, Jr., the owner of *The New Yorker*. ("Whaddya mean you don't want to call Si? *Call* him. He's great! You'll love him! Let's hear what he has to say!") I couldn't do this, I apologetically explained, because it was my understanding that Newhouse is either the fourth or fifth nicest man in America—the Sultan of Brunei, of course, being the nicest man in the world—and this character trait made it highly unlikely that he would say anything provocative or interesting.

I did, however, agree to speak with Silver's attorney, the fearsome Bert Fields. Sounding philosophical, Fields said, "To an extent, all of us who are involved in the motion-picture business live outside reality. We all have certain personas, certain characters that we display in public. I think what's distinctive about Joel is that his public persona is basically the essence of who he is. If you strip away the great and colorful showman that's on the outside, you'll find a great and colorful showman inside."

"He used to say to me—he'd invite me all over the place—he'd tell me, 'Bobby, I'm going to show you Joel Silver's Hollywood,' " I was told by Bobby Woods, a producer and "image consultant," who has worked with Silver on various projects, among them a television special starring Madonna, which was produced for the tenth anniversary of MTV. "He leads a Hollywood life style much more than most of the stars of his movies. Joel has introduced me to more people—he introduced me to Warren, Bert, Ronnie Meyer. If Joel Silver fucked me over tomorrow, if he murdered my family, ruined me financially, I would still have to say, 'But, God, when you add it all up, he was so great to me.' "

TESTIMONIALS of this sort provide evidence that Silver's life has thus far proceeded according to plan. As a child, growing up in South Orange, New Jersey, he would watch movie credits roll and then try to match the names with listings in a Los Angeles phone directory that his father kept in the house. "When I would find a name in the phone book, I would get so excited I would show my parents," he says. "And eventually my parents, thinking I was planning to call those people, hid the phone book. I wasn't going to call them. I wasn't a moron. But the names in the phone book were validation that those were real people. That's just an example of how I tried to make real what to everyone else was pure fantasy." With the phone directory out of reach, he turned to other sources. He became a student of which scripts Hecht and MacArthur had doctored. He read Howard Teichmann on George S. Kaufman. He read "Don't Say Yes Until I Finish Talking," Mel Gussow's biography of Darryl Zanuck. He read Bob Thomas's "King Cohn," "Thalberg," and "Selznick"—"books that ruined my life, to the extent that what you're looking at is a ruined life."

One day in the early seventies, when Silver was a film student at New York University, he and a classmate named Jack Rapke, who is now an agent, were taking a walk through Greenwich Village and confiding their fantasies. "Rapke, I would stab my mother in the back to make it in the movie business," Silver said. "Rapke, I would stab *myself* in the back to make it in the movie business."

Instead of following the precise career path of his spiritual forebears, however—that is, instead of running a studio—Silver has devoted himself primarily to making a certain kind of movie that is calculated to rake in tons of money, and then spending his emoluments in a pasha-like fashion. He left N.Y.U. and headed for Los Angeles before graduating but was still enrolled in a program called the University Without Walls, which allowed students to earn academic credit for "life experience," one stipulation being that they demonstrate in writing how their encounters with reality had expanded their knowledge. Silver never did submit such documentation. Chances are he could still collect a diploma simply by forwarding to the university a regularly updated chart that shows "Joel Silver Worldwide Box-Office Grosses," a listing of the twenty movies for which he has earned a credit as a producer. A recent accounting fell just shy of two billion dollars. His production deal with Warner Bros., which is scheduled to expire late in 1996, is widely believed to be the most lucrative in the business. It guarantees him a million and a half dollars per picture plus a percentage of the gross profits plus a generous discretionary allowance for the development of new projects. In 1990, the National Association of Theatre Owners honored him as the Producer of the Year. Last fall, a Joel Silver star was embedded in the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He owns two homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright—one a textile-block edifice on Hollywood Boulevard, which he finished restoring in 1985, and the other a multi-structure plantation called Auldbrass, near Charleston, South Carolina, which he bought in 1986. Terence Riley, the chief curator of the department of architecture and design of the Museum of Modern Art, considers Auldbrass "one of the most beautiful houses in America."

Silver says he has not reached "the level of a number of my friends who are literally carefree." This circumstance, which is probably temporary, is a function of appetite. "I'm from the I.G. school," he told me. "Instant gratification." Michael Kamen, a composer who has written music for eight of Silver's films, lives in London and, when Silver visits there, enjoys accompanying him on his perambulations. "I get a great deal of pleasure out of watching Joel shop," Kamen says. "He buys. I gape." Silver estimates that he has invested ten million dollars in the restoration and furnishing of Auldbrass, where the second phase of a four-phase master plan is nearing completion. Though he is only forty-one years old and appears to be in vigorous good health, he says, "Auldbrass will never be finished in my lifetime. *I'll* build there until they bury me." For the past few years, Silver has lived with a polite and outgoing young woman who spends most of her time at Auldbrass. She does not darn his socks or iron his handkerchiefs. Nevertheless, she does have obvious positive attributes: she is an accomplished equestrienne, and she has a cheery, relaxed Southern California disposition. In 1991, she was the *Playboy* Playmate of the Year.

"Joel's a guy who has lived his fantasies. I'll bet he still has to pinch himself," Michael Fuchs, the chairman of Home Box Office, which financed Silver's theatrical film "Ricochet" and also sixty-five episodes of a Silver television project called "Tales from the Crypt," said recently. "Joel likes big and expensive. He's making the biggest movies in the world. I don't think Joel is someone who can turn around and make an art movie. He does like to spend money. But he puts it up on the screen."

Howard Deutch, a director whose friendship with Silver extends back twenty years, says, "I've known a lot of people who started out ambitious, who felt nothing could stop them, and, like most of the rest of us in the universe, they've been stopped. Eventually, very, very few people burst through that dream barrier. But Joel is one who did."

Becoming a living legend carries the inconvenience of having to navigate your way around unwieldy pieces of your own folklore. For years, Silver observed a policy of refusing to talk to journalists (except for his sister, Allison, who is the opinion editor of the Los Angeles *Times*). This strategy more or less backfired. Stories about him found their way into print anyway, often with a less than flattering spin. "This is a town of supporters and detractors," he says. "Basically, Hollywood is like high school with money. I said to my friends, 'Don't talk.' But my detractors said, 'I'm here, talk to me.' So I got hit with this rash of ink that I'm still having to live with." The basic story line went: Silver's a spendthrift megalomaniac/his pictures are way too violent and usually way over budget/ *when are they gonna lock this guy up?*

One of my oddest encounters with Silver took place in his office one afternoon not long ago, when he interrupted what sounded like a canned lecture on what it means to make "commercial" movies, pounded his desk with his fist, raised his voice, and said, "You can write what you write. But you can't make me look like a fool. Because I am *not* a fool!" No one I had spoken to, and no one I've encountered since, suggested any such thing. Instead, what one hears about are Silver's intellect, his excesses, his passions, his obsession with details. "I don't make art. I buy art" is an oft-repeated Silverism. The context in which he said it ceases to be relevant; only the mythology matters. It pained him to read that at the instant his mother, Helen, died of a brain tumor, in 1982, he lifted her wrist and appropriated a line from a Marx Brothers movie—"Either my watch has stopped or you're dead"—and added, "I've always wanted to use that line."

"I might have said that at some other time, as a joke," he complains. "But why would I say that about my *own mother*?"

SILVER arrived in Hollywood in 1975, maneuvered his way into a couple of forgettable jobs, and then, in the spring of 1977, went to work for Lawrence Gordon, an independent producer. At one time, Gordon had been a production executive at American International Pictures, a studio that specialized in low-budget exploitation stuff; later, in the mid-eighties, he spent two years as the president of Fox. When he hired Silver, his production credits included "Dillinger" and "Hard Times." During the spring and summer of 1978, three Larry Gordon pictures opened—"The End," "The Driver," and "Hooper"—and Silver found this accomplishment highly impressive. Gordon was funny, witty, personable, and capable of withering outbursts of temper.

"Joel had this very complicated relationship with Larry," says Walter Hill, who directed "Hard Times" and also "The Warriors," a 1979 Gordon film that listed Silver as associate producer, and "48 Hrs." and "Streets of Fire," which Silver and Gordon produced together.

THE DEAR DEPARTED PAST
BY RICHARD MERKIN

MAE MURRAY

ACCORDING to the redoubtable Joe Franklin, when Mae Murray first saw Billy Wilder's "Sunset Boulevard" she expressed a soupçon of skepticism about the character of Norma Desmond: "None of us floozies were *that* nuts!" Curious, because no leading lady—not Negri, not Banky, not Talmadge or even Swanson herself—was so perfect a caricature of a goddess of the Silver Screen as Mae Murray. She was a zany stew of platinum curls, petulance, bee-stung lips, and outrageous pretension, who maintained that she was born "on my father's boat whilst we were at sea," though records proved that she was hatched Marie Adrienne Koenig in Portsmouth, Virginia. Theatrically fragile, and melodramatic to a fault, she insisted that mood music be played on the set while she emoted. The musical stimulation was not always evident in the quality of her performance, yet she was admired by, among others, Abel Gance, who directed "Napoleon," and who was seen by some as the D. W. Griffith of Europe. Oblivious of the mundane, Murray once chased after an irate John Gilbert—who had stalked off the set of Erich von Stroheim's "The Merry Widow"—clad in nothing but her shoes. She fought with von Stroheim, calling him (in her serialized "memoirs") "the dirtiest Hun in Hollywood," but he coaxed her to give the performance of her career. In her heyday, she lived it up to the hilt, and landed herself a prince, a matrimonial achievement that was de rigueur in those heady times. She had a canary-yellow Pierce-Arrow and, for more formal moments, a white Rolls-Royce with a matching Borzoi and a uniformed chauffeur. She lasted into the talkies, but when Hollywood had finally had enough of her peccadilloes she reverted to her musical origins and toured the country giving exhibitions of "The Merry Widow Waltz." According to Richard Schickel, in his book "The Stars," she said on a television show, years after her retirement, that "Steve Reeves was the only current movie personality who matched those of her day." As Schickel reflected, "in a way, of course, she is right." ♦

RICHARD MERKIN

"You can't really think about Joel without thinking about Larry. They were very much in each other's lives in a dynamic way. But they always fought like hell. Larry was the dominant figure. It was father-son—or more like father and bad boy, because Joel was so impulsive he'd get into a fight with the studio and Larry would dive in and get him out and give him hell. It was draining sometimes to be around the two of them."

Silver says he was initially hired as "an assistant-slash-driver." He literally drove Gordon around, carried his briefcase, got sent ahead to the restaurant to hold a table. It was a demeaning but worthwhile experience. "Joel learned every single step from Larry," Howard Deutch, who spent a lot of time with Silver in those days, says. "He let Joel in on everything. The moment of transition from Larry saying to Joel '*You*, go get me a tuna-fish sandwich' to Joel saying to Larry 'Hey, maybe we ought to send "Brewster's Millions" to Richard Pryor'—that transition is an interesting story but hard to pin down. I used to go to Joel's in the morning, and at eight-thirty the phone would start ringing—there was a phone in the bathroom—and all day long it didn't stop. It was Larry every time. It's a question: When did the son become the father, and how did the father feel about that? And it wasn't just work. It was personal, too. Hanging out together, dinner every night, they lived and breathed and dreamed their movies together. Larry was a believer in the action movie from the beginning. Joel understood the power of action—he would use that term, 'the power of action'—and Larry bestowed it on him."

Twice during the early years, Silver left Gordon, and each occasion provided an object lesson in Silver's lack of corporate political skills. In 1979, he became a production vice-president for Universal. "It was probably the worst year of my life," he says. "But it was also an invaluable education, because I learned how to make a movie inside a studio." At Universal, he was assigned to supervise "Xanadu," a Busby Berkeley-style roller-disco musical that starred Gene Kelly and Olivia Newton-John, and, as it happened, was being produced by Gordon. When, inevitably, Silver lost his job with the studio, he went back to Gordon, continued to work on the picture until it was completed, and ended up being credited as a co-producer. Hanging on the wall in

Silver's office bathroom is a photograph of him on the set of "Xanadu," standing next to the director and covering his face as if he could not bear to look at whatever is happening. The picture turned out to be a laughable bomb. Silver then labored with Gordon on "some pretty uneventful movies" and "was tortured some more," and after about a year he left again—this time for Polygram. He had been hired as executive vice-president of production, at two hundred thousand dollars a year, and lasted four months before being fired. Gordon hired him back in early 1982, this time at five hundred dollars a week.

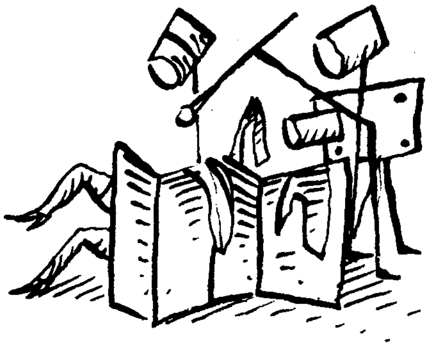
Their next joint enterprise was "48 Hrs.," a venture that Silver today regards as "a pure-luck watershed moment." It was being developed as a comedy for Burt Reynolds and Richard Pryor but ended up as a much harder-edged action-with-humor hybrid, co-starring Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy. "All these movies we make are just B movies with an A sensibility," Silver says. "In the old days, they would be referred to as programmers. We make them slick and glossy, with all these high-tech moviemaking aesthetics, and make them funny, and turn them into A movies."

"48 Hrs." was financed by Paramount, whose president at the time was Michael Eisner, the current chairman of Disney. Before production had gone very far, Eisner and others at the studio decided that Eddie Murphy was wrong for the part of Reggie Hammond, a convict on a forty-eight-hour crime-busting furlough, and should be fired. Silver recognized this as a potentially grave blunder. During one critical meeting, he intemperately called Eisner—who wasn't crazy about him to begin with—a "fucking idiot." Nevertheless, Eddie Murphy remained. "48 Hrs." ultimately grossed a hundred million early-nineteen-eighties dollars and produced these consequences: Eddie Murphy became a not-to-be-trifled-with bazillionaire; Silver's reputation and self-confidence were enhanced by his having gone toe-to-toe with Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg (who was then the head of production at Paramount); and, Silver says, "to this day, I have never had another lunch with Michael Eisner."

"When I started in this business, I was viewed as an uncut diamond," Silver told me. "And everybody thought, I'll polish him, No, I'll polish him. And they had some idea of how I should be polished. And I chose to walk away from most of those people. I felt that I owed Larry Gordon a great deal, and I still do. But the baby bird had to leave the nest."

During the ceremony in 1990 at which Silver was honored as the Producer of the Year, he delivered a brief speech and paid tribute to Gordon as his *Lieber Meister* ("dear master"). This was the same honorific that Silver's idol Frank Lloyd Wright had applied to Louis Sullivan, the mentor from whom he eventually suffered a long-term estrangement. As it happens, Silver and Gordon, for complicated reasons, have now not spoken for more than two years. Their professional relationship lasted on and off for fifteen years and extended across more than a dozen movies, among them major paydays ("Die Hard," "Die Hard 2: Die Harder," and "Predator"—five hundred million combined at the box office) and unambiguous failures ("Streets of Fire"). Gordon was busy elsewhere when Silver was hatching embarrassments like "Action Jackson" and "Ford Fairlane" (the latter starring the execrable Andrew Dice Clay, whose full-page ad in a special "Joel Silver Salute" edition of *The Hollywood Reporter* said, "To the Greatest Producer of the Year from the Most Phenomenal Entertainer of the Century"). On the other hand, Gordon can claim no credit for the hugely successful "Lethal Weapon" series, which Silver produced with the director Richard Donner.

Silver Pictures was founded in 1984, and its first production was "Commando," which featured Arnold Schwarzenegger toting a rocket launcher that looked about as portable as a fire hydrant. What "Commando" had in common with every subsequent Silver action movie was a consistent, though never quite predictable, pattern of "whammos," or "action beats." This was the legacy of an exploitation producer named Fouad Said, who, during the making of a 1975 picture called "Aloha, Bobby and Rose," is reported to have complained to the director, "I saw the dailies yesterday and there were no fucking whammos." In other words, Said was asking, "Where's the beef?"



"Fouad Said had this idea that you could plot a movie out on a whammo chart," Silver says. "He explained it to people at A.I.P., where Larry worked, and Larry, early on, taught it to me. It's easier than it sounds. The rule of thumb is that in every reel of a movie—that means basically every ten minutes—if you're making an action movie, every ten minutes you must have an action beat. Something dramatic and jolting must happen. The audience wants to feel the charge of that action. Now, if you just throw in action for no reason, that's shitty filmmaking. These are formula movies. There are good guys and bad guys. And the bad guy does bad things, so the good guy chases him. And the bad guy loses and the good guy wins. There can be deviations. The bad guys can be aliens, the good guy can be a fish. But at the end of the movie—in this genre of movies—the bad guy loses and the good guy wins. And that has been proved to be a commercially viable formula. I'm proud of that. It's entertainment. People come to the movies we do and they come out having had a roller-coaster ride. The movies are visceral, rough-edged, and exciting. They have a hard shell around them sometimes, but they're fun. And I think that's difficult to do. Some people make films for their friends, some people make films for their families, some make them for critics. We make films for the *audience*. And what are our films *about*? Our films are *about* asses on seats. I mean, Shakespeare had no problem with formula. If you fuck with the formula—if the bad guy wins and the good guy loses—it's going to come off weird. You can do that, but if you're making it for a studio and you're a producer you have a responsibility to return that money to whoever gave it to you. If you're going to do that, you had better have another plan for getting the asses on the seats."

Because moviemaking is a collaborative enterprise, Silver shies away from attempts to define his imprimatur. The most charitable appraisal of his action movies is to discern in them an innocent cynicism—spectacular effects in the service of implausible plot resolutions, cartoonish catharsis with no apologies. The body count accumulates. Houses explode. Automobiles explode. Helicopters explode. Airplanes explode. Office buildings explode. Bombs get wired to toilets. Bad guys get lobotomized with nail guns. When the picture works, Silver and his collaborators get richer. When it doesn't work, he still collects his million-and-a-half-dollar producer's fee but gets pilloried as the emblem of wretched excess.

"Philosophically, Joel is obsessed with what I call 'all good parts' filmmaking," Daniel Waters says. "He wants the white stuff in the Oreo cookies without even touching the black pieces. Most filmmaking is still confined to the convention of a nice story, with nice little parts that build to a climax. I take the position—and this is why Joel and I work well together—that everything that can be done has already been done, so why keep repeating the same three-act structure. What would be the climax in a normal movie is the next scene in a Joel Silver movie. Joel says, 'Cut down this boring exposition process. We got to have another action beat.' Joel's approach is 'Why do we have to set up so many building blocks to get to an explosive climax when you can have the explosive climax *right now* and have *another* explosive climax in the *next* scene?' He's always playing with the form. He's assuming that everyone's seen everything before. He's assuming that you've already taken that first step and he's pushing you to the next step already. That's why he likes the sequel—because the audience is immediately in the pipeline. You know what Joel says—'I want to figure out how to make the sequel without making the original.' "

THE action beats in Silver's life seem to arrive at the prescribed intervals. In trying to monitor his movements during a recent six-week period, I counted three sojourns at Auldbrass, in South Carolina, one of them just a step ahead of the Los Angeles earthquake ("How do you like that? I leave town and one of my movies happens"); five days in London and Paris, during which "The Hudsucker Proxy" was screened for exhibitors; two days at the Sundance Film Festival, in Park City, Utah, for the world première of "Hudsucker"; and a week in New York for "Hudsucker" screenings and other business, including a satisfying negotiation to buy the script of "a virtual-reality action-genre suspense thriller." This is one of several dozen projects that Silver currently has in various stages of development, another one being "Richie Rich," which will star Macaulay Culkin and begin shooting next month. From New York he headed to Japan for a weeklong "Demolition Man" press junket, then back to Auldbrass and on to Los Angeles for a day before leaving on a five-day cruise with friends aboard a forty-two-metre luxury chartered yacht in the Caribbean.

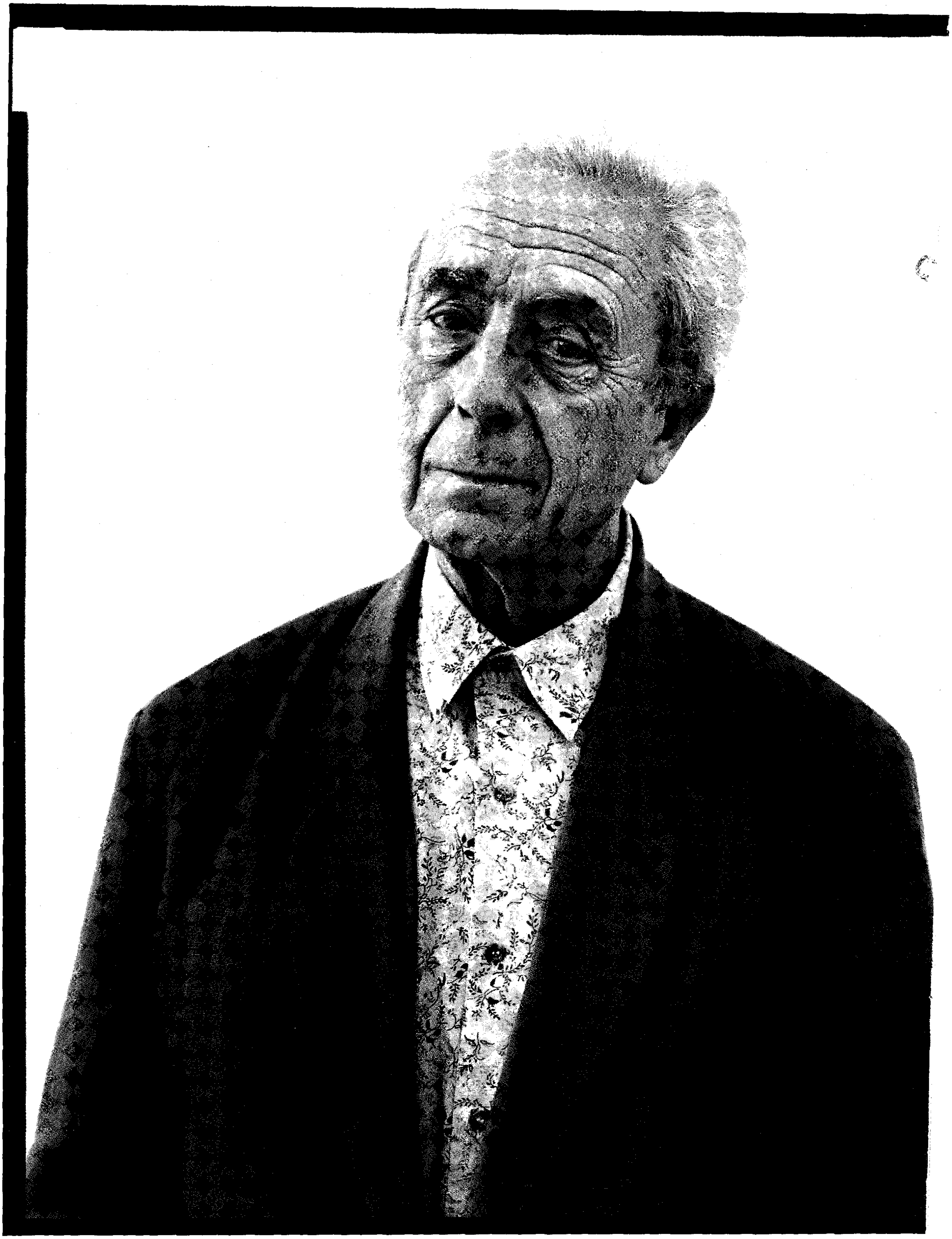
The timing of the Japanese trip meant that he was unable to attend the opening of "Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect," at the Museum of Modern Art. Silver owns virtually every book in English that has ever been published about Wright, and he has hired Wright's grandson, the architect Eric Lloyd Wright, to supervise the restoration of Auldbrass and his Los Angeles house. His monologues contain frequent jump cuts from, say, his vision of "Predator 3" ("I have an idea . . . It could be done cheaply . . . The monster would be the star") to rambling, factually dense disquisitions on Wright's life and work. For the Wright show at MOMA, he donated the services of Flex Armijo, a mason whom he employs full-time, and also the materials required for Armijo and an assistant to assemble two walls—one constructed in the same textile-block pattern as the Storer house, Silver's home in Los Angeles, and the other an example of a cast concrete block that Wright designed for a Usonian Automatic house in Washington State.

Plugging "Hudsucker," Silver regularly told interviewers, "I never thought my name and 'the Coen brothers' would be uttered in the same sentence"—a bit of droll self-deprecation, trotted out after the fashion of a politician on the stump. "Hudsucker" cost twenty-five million dollars to make—far more than any previous Coen-brothers film. Several years ago, in a *Times* story about Robert Daly and Terry Semel, the chairman and the president, respectively, of Warner Bros., Silver was quoted as saying, "I'd take a bullet for these guys." In various ways, Daly and Semel have expressed their gratitude for this sentiment. At Silver's urging, the studio agreed to put up half the money for "Hudsucker"—a movie that it had previously passed on—in exchange for the domestic distribution rights; Polygram put up the other half and got the foreign rights. Once filming had begun, Silver says, he told Joel and Ethan Coen, "If you never want to talk to me again until you're finished, that's fine." As things turned out, the Coen brothers sought his counsel frequently. "And I thought that was great," he says. "I gave them my opinion, my advice and input, and some of what I said was incorporated into their thinking and into the movie."

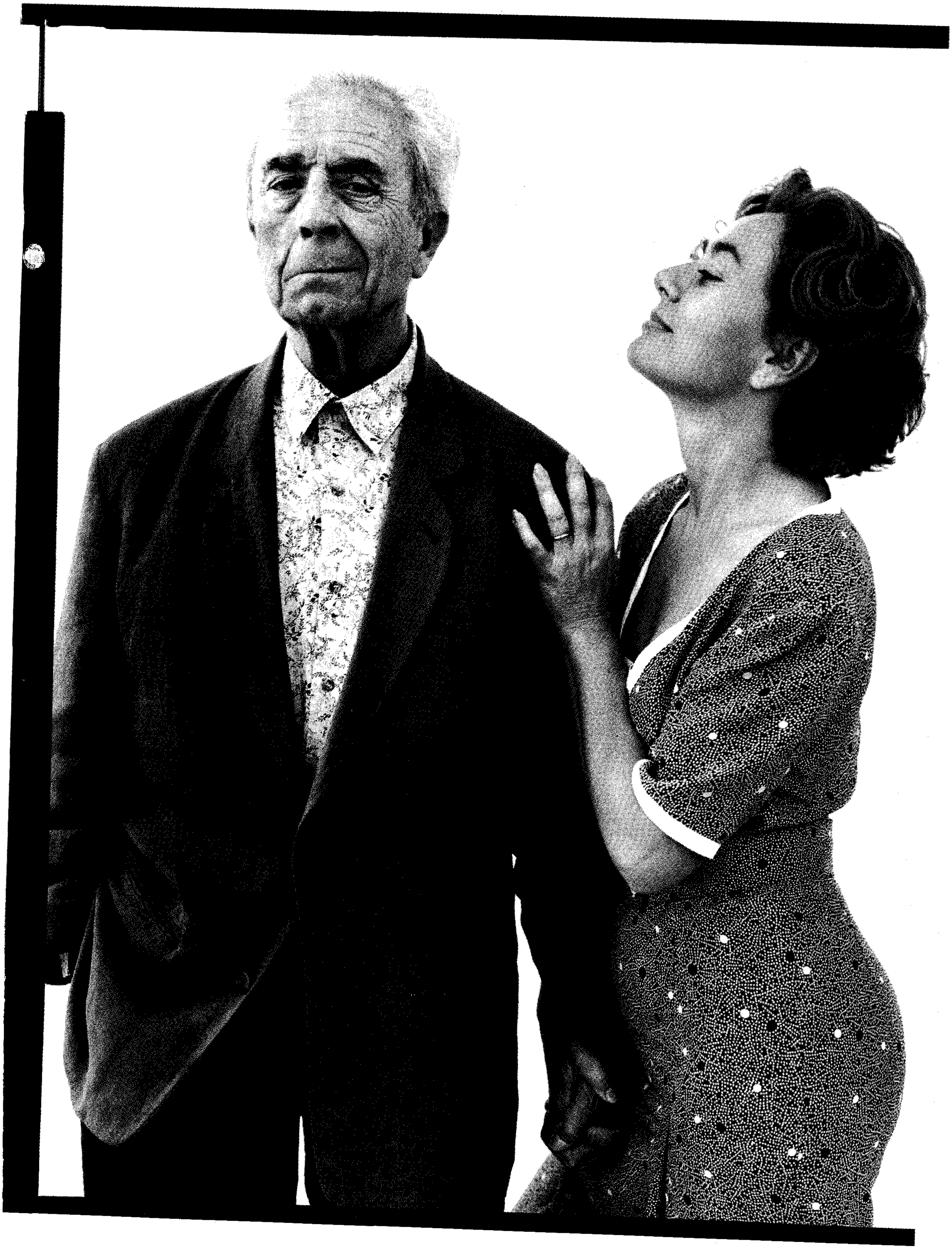
One day during Silver's trip to New York for the "Hudsucker" press screenings, I was checking the television listings in the *Times* and noticed that "Predator 2" was playing at 8 P.M. on Channel 11. "A futuristic thug-filled Los Angeles. Mindless, mean-spirited," the capsule review said. At eleven that night, on Channel 13, Silver was booked for a conversation with Charlie Rose, who asked him how he reconciled his love of Frank Lloyd Wright with his love of action movies.

"Whatever personal demons we have, they motivate us, they get us to do what we've got to do," Silver said. "In my life now, I am just very happy entertaining people. I like making these big movies that people sit in an audience and have a great time with. That excites me now. It also allows me to entertain a passion for architecture, which is a very expensive passion. . . . I need one to get the other, so it kind of seems to work out for me."

Silver seemed utterly at ease with his reply to this question—as comfortable as he is with the fact that the rest of the world looks at him and sees a full-frontal anomaly, while he sees only himself. The composer Michael Kamen recalls that a few years ago Silver approached him about working on "The Last Boy Scout," which, as it happens, is one of three films the making of which Silver has described to me as "the single worst experience of my life." Kamen says, "Joel had seen a film I worked on with Terry Gilliam, and he said to me, 'You know, you write beautiful melodies. Why don't you ever give me melodies?' I said, 'But, Joel, you never give me anything to write melodies for.' Then he showed me some footage of Bruce Willis breaking a guy's nose. I asked him, 'How can I make a melody of that?' And he didn't hesitate. He said, 'This movie is about redemption.' So I said, 'O.K., Joel. You want redemption? No problem. I'll write you a melody about redemption.' " ♦



SHOWCASE: *Michelangelo Antonioni and his wife, Enrica, photographed by Richard Avedon in Rome, May 18, 1993.*



REFLECTIONS

THE MOVIE LOVER

Pauline Kael wrote about movies for The New Yorker from 1967 until 1991, when she retired from regular reviewing. Her pieces changed the way people talk about motion pictures. But it wasn't always easy, as she writes in the introduction to her anthology "Pauline Kael For Keeps," coming out this fall.

BY PAULINE KAEL

I'VE been lucky: I wrote about movies during a great period, and I wrote about them for a great readership, at *The New Yorker.* It was the best job in the world. But it didn't come about quickly. I had written about movies for almost fifteen years, trying to be true to the spirit of what I loved about movies, trying to develop a voice that would avoid saphead objectivity and let the reader in on what sort of person was responding to the world in this particular way. Writing from the San Francisco area, publishing in a batch of mostly obscure "little" magazines, reviewing on KPFA in Berkeley, and then, in 1965, bringing out "I Lost it at the Movies," I razzed the East Coast critics and their cultural domination of the country. (We in the West received the movies encumbered with stern punditry.) I was in my mid-thirties when my first review was published, in the San Francisco quarterly *City Lights,* in 1953; by the time I wrote about "Bonnie and Clyde" in *The New Yorker,* in 1967, I was close to fifty. But after I moved to New York and became a professional (i.e., salaried) reviewer, I had to fight to keep my hard-won voice.

It took a long time for that direct, spoken tone to catch on with *New Yorker* readers. Some of them were real stiffs. If I said I'd walked out on a Fellini extravaganza or a movie of a Pinter play, they informed me that it was my duty to go back and see it all the way through. The hate mail piled up. Then, curiously, some of the readers seemed to begin to enjoy hating me. Maybe my conversational American tone brought them into a closer relationship than they'd been accustomed to; maybe what they had first experienced as a crude invasion from the pop world began to be something they looked forward to. Whatever it was, I can't believe that any other movie critic has had such thoughtful, picky, exuberant readers. They saw aspects of a movie that I had been blind to or hadn't fully perceived. Hyperintelligent, they were maddeningly eager to catch me out. They said I added to their experience of a movie, and I know they often added to mine.

It was true conviviality—a variation of the intense discussions about the arts that I'd had with friends in high school and college—except that there was never really time to answer the readers' letters properly. By the late sixties, movies had become so political that just about every comment on a movie sparked wider discussion. And readers were arguing with me over last week's movie when I was trying to check this week's galleys and clear my head to get into next week's subjects.

My life was especially hectic during my first years at *The New Yorker,* because I (literally) spent more time and effort restoring what I'd written than writing it. The editors tried to turn me into just what I'd been struggling not to be: a genteel, fuddy-duddy stylist who says "One assumes that . . ." Sometimes almost every sentence was rearranged. The result was tame and correct; it lost the sound of spoken language. I would scramble for nine or ten hours putting back what I had written, marking the galleys carefully, so they couldn't be misread, and then I would rush to see William Shawn to get the galleys approved. Since he was the person who had instigated the finicky changes, the couple of hours I spent with him were an exhausting series of pleas and negotiations. He had given me a handshake agreement when he hired me that no word would be changed without consultation, and he stuck by his word, but I had to fight for every other contraction, every bit of slang, every description of a scene in a movie that he thought morally offensive—not my description but the scene itself. He didn't see why those things had to be mentioned, he said.

Our sessions were complicated by the fact that he was a loving, dedicated editor and sometimes he was right. But I had to fight him anyway—how else could I keep from turning into one of his pets? He was the most squeamish man I'd ever met. He could hardly ever see all of a film—a hint of blood would send him packing—and so I wrote "Fear of Movies" to spook him. He hero-worshipped Gandhi, and so I made a dumb joke comparing the Gandhi of the 1982 film to the guilt-inducing Jewish mothers that TV comics complained about, and, despite his humble entreaties, refused to remove it. I hardened myself against his disappointed-in-you expression; I had to. Once when I compared the sets of a movie to a banana split, his suggested alternative was a pousse-café. When I quoted Herman J. Mankiewicz's famous line "Imagine—the whole world wired to Harry Cohn's ass," he insisted that it be "Harry Cohn's derrière." (I won out.) For more than twenty years, William Shawn and I squared off like two little pit bulls. I was far from being the only writer who fought him, but it took years for me to learn about the others. He told each of us that we were the only ingrates. He brought up the names of all the famous writers who, according to him, had been appreciative of the editing; it was a nightmare listening to that litany. Yet he could also be more responsive to what a writer was trying to do than anyone else I've ever encountered. The man was an enigma. On the day after my review of Mailer's "Marilyn" appeared in the Sunday *Times Book Review,* we ran into each other in a hallway. "Why didn't you give that to us?" he asked. "What for?" I answered. "You wouldn't have printed it." "That's right," he said mournfully.

By the seventies, I'd won some free-

PAUL DAVIS

dom; there were still beefs, but there was no more of that sentence-by-sentence quibbling that can turn your brains to jelly. Maybe partly because of my slangy freedom, reactions to my reviews were startlingly physical. When I was introduced to Tennessee Williams at a New York Film Festival party at Lincoln Center, he crowed my name, scooped me up high above his head, and spun about, twirling me in the air. He was short but muscular; I had a flash of news stories I'd read about the strength of the mad. But he was a grinning, happy madman—he was euphoric—and I knew that we were friends. (I also knew that part of his glee was the discovery of how small I was.) I had written enthusiastically of the underground star Holly Woodlawn, the female impersonator who played the wife in "Trash"; when we met, at a New York Film Critics' Awards party in Sardi's, Holly, who was usually referred to as "she," was wearing spike heels, a satin gown, and a monkey-fur jacket. He seemed to forget all that as he swung me up to his height to hug me and deliver a big smooch. John Cassavetes, on the opening day of one of his psychodramas, grabbed me as I came out of the theatre and hoisted me, and as I hung there helpless in his grip, my tootsies dangling at least three feet from the sidewalk, his companions, Ben Gazzara and Peter Falk, were chuckling. Cassavetes was saying "Love ya, Pauline, just love ya," and I felt that he wanted to crush every bone in my body.

The most unlikely men—and women, too—suddenly turned macho around me; they didn't all offer to butt heads, as Norman Mailer did, but many confronted me angrily, and my escorts often had to calm them down. Years ago, I went to Elaine's twice, and fights erupted at my table both times. I think that the disjunction between my strong voice as a writer and my five-foot frame somehow got to people: they wanted to take me on—it made them feel big and courageous. I know that I wasn't exactly the innocent party: people who don't like my writing find it both Olympian and smart-alecky. I guess at some level it *is*. But it was hellish to have actors with hurt feelings come gunning for me, demanding to know what right I had not to like a performance of theirs or of a friend of theirs. Gradually, I stopped going to social gatherings in New York.

What began for me as a gregarious activity—talking about movies—became, at last, almost a monastic pursuit. I lived in a small town in Massachusetts, came into New York City a few days a week to see the new movies, and returned home to write. And as the seventies gave way to the eighties the excitement I had earlier found in the movies gave way to the pleasure I found in writing.

My pieces belong to the breakneck era before people could rent videos of old movies and before distributors began to supply reviewers with videos of new movies. (Reviewers can use the video as a text.) I wrote at first sight and, when referring to earlier work, from memory. This had an advantage: urgency, excitement. But it also led to my worst flaw as a writer: reckless excess, in both praise and damnation. Writing very fast and trying to distill my experience of a movie, I often got carried away by words. I'd run on, and I'd hit too many high notes. And I'd repeat myself or say things that were only slightly different from what I'd said before. When I look at what I wrote, the adjectives seem fermented, and I long to strike out a word here, a phrase there. I have resisted, because tidying up the reviews would make them false to what I felt then, and false to the period itself. (Did I, as I have read, exaggerate how "Last Tango in Paris" affected me in order to help the film? No. I haven't seen it since its festival showing, yet I retain a clear memory of its emotional nakedness.)

A friend of mine says that he learned from reading me that "content grows from language, not the other way around." That's a generous way of saying that I let it rip, that I don't fully know what I think until I've said it. The reader is in on my thought processes.

It always seemed miraculous to be paid for what I loved doing. I'd still be doing it if age and illness hadn't laid me low. I'd be doing it despite the staleness of American movies. I've heard bright, jaded remarks, such as "I wouldn't mind missing the good movies if I could miss the bad ones" and "The only reason for going to movies now is to see why you're not going to movies." If I could go on, I'd be writing about why people feel that way.

The writing I did over three decades may give readers the sense of how movies interacted with public life, and give them, too, the critic's first flushes of discovery. I'm frequently asked why I don't write my memoirs. I think I have. ♦

INTERVIEW

KAEL TALKS

BY HAL ESPEN

ESPEN: Why do you refer to objectivity as "saphead objectivity"?

KAEL: I hate to spell it out, but here goes: Our responses to a movie grow out of our experience, knowledge, temperament—maybe even our biochemistry. I always thought that the reason Stanley Kauffmann and I so rarely agreed on things was clear if you looked at his measured walk versus my incautious quick steps. I'm just naturally attuned to jump-cutting.

I tried to put my background and predilections right out on top, so that the reader could know what my responses came from. And I tried to suggest perspectives on moviegoers' emotions, because we're all susceptible, in varying degrees, to dramatic pressure.

Ideally, criticism is a matter of your intelligence and all your intuitions coming into play. Yes, a critic should be disinterested, not have a stake in the outcome of a movie at the box office, but you can't make an objective judgment in any of the arts, and this should be perfectly clear about movies, because they touch people's responses on so many levels.

ESPEN: What makes you read a movie critic regularly?

KAEL: Flashes of insight—especially about what the movie means and how it affects us. But I'll gladly take them about a performance, the sets—whatever. I'll even settle for a good phrase. There are eminent critics—steady, intelligent—who have never had a perception that could spark a fresh thought in anybody. They're so higher-degree educated they're drained. You read them and think, Yah, yah, yah. I'll read anyone who makes me laugh and is on target.

ESPEN: Which did you like more, to pan or to praise?

KAEL: Panning can be fun—you roll up your sleeves and head into the Augean stable. But it's also showoffy and cheap—it isn't sustaining. If you really like something, writing becomes humble and stirring. You give yourself to the work you're describing. You want to do it justice, and you want to share the pleasure it has given you. Writing about it intensifies your own pleasure.

ESPEN: Did you ever think you'd been cruel?

KAEL: Yes, and I knew it at the time I was writing. It wasn't being cruel to be kind, either. There's so much intellectual sloppiness out there that sometimes you have to be ruthless to keep a sane basis for writing about pop culture. And sometimes a cruel remark—even if it's an overstatement—is the best way to get a point across.

ESPEN: Do you think there are many independent-minded critics at work now?

KAEL: Some—there are always some. But the vast majority are swept up in the campaigns for movies and in the atmosphere at the time. For example, Woody Allen's "Manhattan Murder Mystery" is, I think, the most enjoyable movie he's made in years, but it was passed over, maybe because it's so light in tone, or maybe because it wasn't fashionable at that moment to like a Woody Allen movie. The picture is a dud as a mystery, but it's a lovely marital comedy. Maybe co-writing once again with Marshall Brickman helped restore Allen to the timing he used to have. And when he and Diane Keaton get a rhythm going it's as if they'd never stopped being comedy teammates.

ESPEN: Some people say that you tell young critics what to think.

KAEL: Yes, I've read that I run a conspiratorial network of young critics. The evidence seems to be that young writers often parrot me. But who wants to be imitated? A number of critics take phrases and attitudes from me, and those takings stick out—they're not integral to the writer's temperament or approach. I hate it when I read a piece in a magazine and hear echoes of things that I wrote years ago, on totally different subjects. If I told critics what to think, do you suppose they'd be acclaiming "Unforgiven" and "The Piano" and "Naked"?

ESPEN: How do you deal with the possibility that your reaction against something like "The Piano" may grow out of your having seen so much?

KAEL: You try your best to clue in the reader. Sometimes the less there is going on under the surface of a daydream movie like "The Piano," the more moviegoers project into it. They make it theirs. So there mightn't be much purpose in my comparing the image of the piano on the beach to the imagery in Polanski's short film "Two Men and a Wardrobe," but I'd definitely try to contrast "The Piano" with "Utu," the 1983 New Zealand film by Geoff Murphy, in which a band of Maori guerrillas vandalize the farmhouse of a British couple and pound on the piano before smashing it out the window. The piano represented the wife's last connection with the culture she'd come out of, and it represented the culture the Maoris wanted to desecrate. Its destruction has a lot more resonance than anything in "The Piano." But then in "Utu" the woman played Beethoven. Holly Hunter plays New Age trills.

ESPEN: What about the director, Jane Campion, who's viewed as a great new talent?

KAEL: She does have a gift for imagery. But she's totally arbitrary, in an art-school way. Things don't hang together in her movies. The symbolism never really registers fully, because you can't tell what she's symbolizing, though you know damn well it's symbolic. "The Piano" could be a silly erotic fantasy and still be fun if it didn't have so much unexamined feminine smugness. That's what sets it apart from, say, a romantic gothic that would lull an audience with sweet dreams. This movie congratulates its heroine for any damn thing she does.

ESPEN: You used to answer a huge volume of mail. Do you still answer letters?

KAEL: Well, the volume is way down, but I can't answer them all anyway. I want to, but, with Parkinson's, I can't get my hand to oblige.

ESPEN: What do people write about?

KAEL: Mostly, they want to know what I think of a particular movie—Streisand's "The Prince of Tides," for example, or "The Crying Game."

ESPEN: And what *do* you think of them?

KAEL: If Streisand were more tough-minded, "The Prince of Tides" could be enjoyable camp. But her sincerity—the naked emotionalism she pours into it—makes it somewhat embarrassing. I think that the emotionalism is what affects people and what they find a little bewildering. As for "The Crying Game," watching it I kept thinking, If the hero's lover had been a clinging-vine woman who built altars to her men, she would have been considered a sick chick, and the hero advised to get away fast. With a transvestite in the role, many people found the relationship weirdly romantic and kicky.

ESPEN: People just really went for that kind of secret, although it was an open secret by the time the movie came out.

KAEL: Well, it was open the first time some of us looked at the guy. His wrists and his voice. But I think it wasn't just the publicity gimmick. The picture had a romantic pull for many people. It had something they'd been missing in movies—the magnetism they'd have shrugged off in a boy-girl picture.

Neil Jordan has got to extend his territory. In "Mona Lisa" he had a man falling in love with a lesbian; in "The Miracle" he had a man falling in love with his mother; in "The Crying Game" he has a man falling in love with a transvestite. Still, Jordan has a wonderful gift for atmosphere. A number of silent-film directors gave audiences a sense of magical possibility—of romantic enchantment. Neil Jordan is one of the few new directors who have that lyricism.

ESPEN: People felt very protective of "Rain Man," and were convinced that it did something serious. You got a lot of complaints, didn't you?

KAEL: I got very angry mail from people who felt that I didn't appreciate the real-life seriousness of autism, because I didn't appreciate the movie. The press, in general, publicizes what the director says he's doing, and afterward the reviewers tend to review his intentions rather than what's on the screen. If some of us then point out what's actually up there people get upset, because we're not respecting that artist's wonderful hard work for humanity. Not many reviewers have a real gift for effrontery. I think that may be my best talent.

ESPEN: It's a talent that could be viewed as a detriment to one's professional success.

KAEL: Oh, sure. But if you can't make fun of bad movies on serious subjects what's the point?

ESPEN: Your review of "Shoah" was one of your most controversial, and you had to fight William Shawn to get him to run it. Do you have any regrets about that particular battle?

KAEL: No. I was being honest about what I knew and what I felt.

ESPEN: I suppose that I can understand editors facing the fallout of running something like that, and preferring to leave it alone.

KAEL: Sure. But, on the other hand, editors who show courage in some directions maybe could be pushed to show it in other directions. I mean, a Holocaust movie should not be sacrosanct simply because of the subject. I think most of the reviewers were willing to call the director of "Shoah" a great filmmaker because he'd taken on a great subject. They used to treat Stanley Kramer as a great filmmaker, too, especially when he made the nuclear-disaster movie "On the Beach."

ESPEN: Did you know when what you said was going to cause a ruckus?

KAEL: In this case, yes, but not always. People take offense at things you never would have guessed at. A friend of mine told me that he took a date to see a movie that had delighted him, and afterward she walked so far from him on the sidewalk she might have crossed the street. I sometimes felt as if *New Yorker* readers kept crossing the street. People almost deliberately want to misunderstand what a critic is saying. If a movie touches a nerve, they accuse you of the wildest sorts of things.

ESPEN: The whole social dimension of moviegoing is something that just doesn't exist in television. I can remember so many kinds of strange emotional aftermaths of moviegoing, whether I was on a date or with a bunch of friends.

KAEL: If you disagree about too many movies, it's very hard to sustain a friendship.

ESPEN: There aren't many other art forms, or public forms of entertainment, where that's really the case.

KAEL: No. If you go to a dance concert, or an opera, you're relatively safe. But if you go to a movie you never know what's going to be dug up. I know people who can't talk about movies they've seen to friends on the telephone when their spouse is in the room, because they disagree and it has become a sore spot.

But, of course, there's the other side, too—the friendships based on shared movie tastes.

"I'm sorry, Sue, but Will can't come out. He has to stay in and finish his screenplay."

ESPEN: I'm curious about some of your early moviegoing experiences—about what films affected you strongly, in the way that films can when you're very young.

KAEL: I saw so much. It was movies in general that drew me. When García Márquez says that he wouldn't have written novels if he'd been able to make movies, it's clear what he's saying, because there are so many elements that go into movies that he could have used. It's a supreme art form, and for a while there Coppola and Altman and Godard and Bertolucci and a dozen others ran with it. That's why when I think it's used badly I'm so derisive. I want so much from it because the possibilities are there. On dates, my enthusiasm would often be condescended to by the fellow. He would think it was his mission to straighten me out. And, you know, if you hold forth about why something's great with a guy who just wants you to calm down it's a flattening experience. You learn to shut up, or you find another guy. Or you don't.

ESPEN: I wanted to ask you about one feature of your writing that bothered some people—the use of "we" and "you."

KAEL: It was never an imperial "we"—it was "we" in the audience, or "we" as a group. I always used it right alongside "I," to make the distinction between my reactions and what the collective audience might be reacting to. I used "you" in an indefinite way, to represent "you people" or "one" or "I," and relied on the context to make the meaning clear. I used it in the way we use it in conversation, where you say, "You know that such-and-such." About once a year, I used "one." I avoid "cinema" the way I avoid "one," because where I grew up only pretentious phonies said they were going to the "cinema" or referred to themselves as "one."

ESPEN: I'm fascinated by the idea of what kind of person it takes to be—to become—a movie director.

KAEL: Let's be brutal: It takes a person who can raise the money to make a movie.

ESPEN: And also what kind of career a director can have. I mean, there are such odd inconsistencies and ups and downs in a director's career.

KAEL: I think you're being a bit dreamy. Educated people often now speculate about directors' lives the way less educated people used to fantasize about the stars. And they read *Premiere* the way stenographers used to read *Photoplay*.

ESPEN: I take your point, and I'll throw one back. What about the issue of relationships with filmmakers, whether it's just a critical relationship or actually a kind of deeper affinity that crosses over into friendship?

KAEL: Do you mean, "Is it O.K. to hang out with the people you write about?" Let's say it's dicey. I think the deeper affinity is deeper than friendship. There are directors I personally don't really feel any warm response to whose work I care for intensely. That's one of the surprises in the arts. You think that you would like somebody personally if you like his work, and that may not be the case at all. Anyway, I've very rarely had personal relations with directors, even the ones I've written about a great deal.

I knew Jean Renoir very well. I knew him perhaps better than I've known any other director. One night in the fifties, I was at home in Berkeley working on displays for the theatres I managed, and and Jean Renoir stood there; we fell into each other's arms, and I guess you could say we never fell out. Somebody had sent him some things I'd written about him; he had gone looking for me at the theatres, and was directed to my house. We remained in close touch until his death, yet his later movies—from the period in which I knew him—I didn't care for very much. He knew that, and it was a source of pain to both of us.

I knew Peckinpah fairly well. It's a funny combination, Renoir and Peckinpah. But most of the directors whom I've been said to be on close terms with I know hardly at all. I've only seen Brian De Palma to say "How do you do?" to two or three times.

ESPEN: I've heard people criticize you for having what they view as a kind of unseemly loyalty to a filmmaker or engaging in special pleading for him, and yet sometimes the same people seem infuriated by what they see as a kind of perverse fickleness.

KAEL: I know. I suspect that behind all this is the notion that a woman can't

COLLABORATIONS

JOHN GUARE ON LOUIS MALLE

ON July 28, 1979, Louis Malle called me out of the blue with this news: A group of Canadian producers had raised seven and a half million dollars to make a movie that would take advantage of a government plan allowing every dollar spent in film production during the calendar year 1979 to be a hundred per cent deductible. They wanted Louis to make a thriller that would star Susan Sarandon and an as yet unnamed "bankable male star." The only problem was that it would have to be finished by the last day of the year and they didn't have a script. Did I have any ideas?

As a matter of fact, I did. I had become fascinated by Atlantic City, which had recently legalized gambling. I hoped that Louis, who had made remarkable documentaries, might share my fascination. He did. We drove down there the next day, two strangers. At the entrance to the casino in Resorts International, we saw an oyster bar staffed by perkily uniformed women: hopeful blackjack dealers who had to prove themselves worthy by working in a menial job for several months before moving up the ladder into the casino. Louis and I looked at each other. Susan. A shorthand had begun.

In a picture book about Atlantic City we came across a photograph of a nineteen-twenties gangster convention. In the back row stood a young thug who today would be the age of our older bankable male star. This old guy, we decided, would fall in love with our oyster-bar waitress, who's come all the way from—it's a Canadian picture—Saskatchewan! She moves into a building next door to the old gangster, who sees her as a goddess. Opera. "Norma." Callas. Of course! "Casta diva." A chaste goddess who works in a clam bar. I remembered reading in "Hints from Heloise" that the best way to remove fish smell was to rub yourself with lemons. Susan would clean herself with lemons while the old guy watched and "Norma" blared!

Louis made a face that would become a constant. He closed his eyes and screwed up his features. Hello? Had he fallen asleep? His eyes opened. He said, "Use it. Go on."

The next day, Louis went to France, and on August 10th I flew over with an actual first draft. Louis was waiting for me on the train platform in Toulouse, reading a book. Awkward greetings. Good flight? You have the draft? I patted my briefcase. I asked him what he was reading. He held up a nineteenth-century thriller, "Les Mystères de Paris," by Eugène Sue. I took out of my pocket the book I was reading. "Mysteries of Paris." In English. Buoyed by this weird coincidence, we babbled all the way to his house about the brilliant plotting of this extravagant melodrama.

For a week, we worked around the clock. Then the producers arrived. We acted out the story for them. They huddled. Could we, they asked us, really deliver a movie by December 31st? Sure! Isn't collaboration a folie à deux?

We started filming on October 31st, with Burt Lancaster as the old gangster. The producers wanted to know why the writer was still on the picture and still writing and why they were paying him per diems when the script was good enough. In response, Louis spoke these immortal words: "If you have someone on the set for the hair, why would you not have someone for the words?"

We finished shooting on New Year's Eve. ♦

be a true critic—that she has pets, and also that she's vindictive. It's simply natural in the arts to have preferences. You wouldn't be a critic if you didn't have emotional involvements with the work of certain artists of the past and the present.

ESPEN: Am I right in thinking that you're disappointed in Scorsese?

KAEL: He has become a much more proficient craftsman, but the first films he did that I responded to intensely—"Mean Streets" and "Taxi Driver"—had a sense of discovery. He was looking into himself and the world. I was disappointed in "GoodFellas," and I thought "Cape Fear" was just a terrible mistake. "The Age of Innocence" is really Merchant Ivory terrain. Even though Scorsese shows what he can do with it in some ways, he doesn't shape the material. I thought the movie disintegrated.

ESPEN: When you think of Scorsese working with Daniel Day-Lewis—

KAEL: You want more. Day-Lewis is the kind of actor that De Niro was as a young man. You don't want just to see him anguished.

ESPEN: What about De Niro?

KAEL: It's a long time since he's shown the fervor of his work in "Godfather II" or the intensity of "Taxi Driver" and his restless bopper in "New York, New York." I enjoyed him in his brief performance as Al Capone in "The Untouchables." I liked him in "Brazil." But in the big performances something sluggish and stolid has crept into his acting. When he attempted comedy with Sean Penn in "We're No Angels," it was Penn who made me laugh. I find De Niro heavy-spirited.

ESPEN: What do you think of Michelle Pfeiffer?

KAEL: It may be because she has such a great camera face that she hasn't got her full due as an actress. She seems the most American of the women stars, but she has surprising range. You see her opposite Sean Connery in "The Russia House" and you accept her as Russian without fuss or doubts. I accepted her as Catwoman. She was lovably nasty.

ESPEN: You clearly have favorite directors also.

KAEL: Yes, of course, and I have blank spots, too—such as Fassbinder. Ozu, too. But if you mean do I play favorites, I don't think so. It's apparent to anybody who reads me that I think Altman has some real achievements to his credit, even though I've been disappointed in many of his films. I used to say that he made a good one and then a bad one, and so on. He made both in "Short Cuts." It has some of his worst work and some of his best.

ESPEN: Can you give me an example of each?

KAEL: Sure. The little boy trudging home after he's been hit by a car is almost unbearably fine. The camera fastened on Jack Lemmon's back as he walks down the hospital corridor pushes its point—it's awful. Lemmon tries so hard he has a special mood-altering quality. He seems to be pleading with you, and you think, What is it he's pleading with us for, in movie after movie? What does he want from us? Of course, in "Short Cuts" you also have Tom Waits and Lily Tomlin, and Bruce Davison, and Madeleine Stowe, and others who are in character.

ESPEN: What other directors do you feel a bond with?

KAEL: There's a deviltry in Paul Mazursky's films that makes me laugh. I often read stories that make me think, Paul Mazursky should make a movie of this—like Lore Segal's "Her First American." Oh, and when I read Saul Bellow's "A Silver Dish" in *The New Yorker* I thought Mazursky could make a classic short film for TV out of it.

Let me put it this way: We all know that people in the audience have their own special tastes in directors and performers. Well, so do critics. Maybe they think differently from the guy who just wants to see sullen, pouty, slutty women; maybe they don't. The difference between the layman and the critic is not that the critic is "objective" but that he probably has more background in the art and, if the gods smile on him, he can write. And perhaps the critic's work has sharpened his tastes. For example, there's an intelligence in Judy Davis's acting in "Husbands and Wives" that I find exciting—it's a more controlled and sophisticated form of what Bette Davis had for some of us in the thirties and forties. You felt there was a drive there to express herself via acting; some people found it rather repellent. But, on the other hand, I respond to what I think the large audience responds to in Julia Roberts. There is something about her in "Pretty Woman" that's enormously touching. That broad smile gets to just about everybody. But Julia Roberts not smiling is like Tom Cruise meditating.

ESPEN: You know, that whole group of women stars of the thirties and forties didn't make any impression on me as a kid.

KAEL: Maybe they would have if you'd been born earlier and been a girl. Bette Davis's nervous sass got to me. It was as if she were saying, "I'm more alert than women are supposed to be and I'm not afraid to be a cartoon."

ESPEN: Did Katharine Hepburn do that, too?

KAEL: She made an impression of a very different kind. She was like no one I'd ever imagined. She made a style out of affectation and then, at her best, transcended it. I'm thinking of movies such as "Little Women" and "Alice Adams" and her great performance in "Long Day's Journey Into Night."

ESPEN: How is it different with actors now?

KAEL: It's a period of sensational acting, even though actors don't often get a chance at shaped characters. When they do, as in the small roles that Holly Hunter and Gary Busey had in "The Firm," they pop up like jack-in-the-boxes. Kelly Lynch pops up even in turgid melodramas, and Suzy Amis really takes the camera. Tim Roth seems to be able to give shape to each role he plays. And Susan Sarandon becomes more richly sensual.

TV is a good medium for actors—I'm thinking of Albert Finney in "The Green Man," on A&E. Two-parters and three-parters give them a chance to develop a character. But performances on TV don't vibrate in memory the way big-screen ones do, because there's usually even less of an imaginative structure supporting them. And there isn't the interval of thinking them over while going home. But some stay with me—James Woods as Roy Cohn on HBO, Brian Dennehy in a whole batch of roles. Kelly McGillis surprised me in Jeff Bleckner's "In the Best of Families." And Andre Braugher on "Homicide" is about as good as acting gets.

Anybody who cares about acting might take a look at Mercedes Ruehl's performance in Martha Coolidge's version of "Lost in Yonkers." Or Robert Duvall in "Days of Thunder." Or look at Jeff Bridges as the ex-con in "American Heart." Every little physical detail is right. The picture maybe has too much integrity and not enough dramatic imagination; you get a whiff of virtue. But Bridges is the real thing.

ESPEN: What about the kinds of roles that actresses are getting today?

KAEL: Taller, stronger-looking actresses play revamped cliché heroines but with titles such as Doctor or Captain. They can throw a punch like a man—they're toy boys. As moviegoers, we get to watch these wonderful amazons: Sigourney Weaver, Daryl Hannah, Geena Davis, Uma Thurman, Laura Dern, and all the others. But only a few—Anjelica Huston, Christine Lahti, Joely and Natasha Richardson—have, on occasion, landed real women's roles. Still, you know, the situation isn't much better for men.

ESPEN: Is sexual politics getting into movies?

KAEL: A lot of it is. Most conspicuously in the rabble-rouser "Thelma & Louise," a revenge movie for women that distorts the issues it poses much as the Charles Bronson "Death Wish" movies used to. Along the way, the heroines destroyed a working-class man, the man with the rig, because he had the wrong style. He had low-down sexist attitudes, and the women were outraged by them. If he'd been upper-class, he wouldn't have talked like that. It's a class-unconscious movie. And then the doomsday finish! The women punish men by killing themselves—they're heading for an all-girl heaven.

ESPEN: Did you see "The Fugitive"?

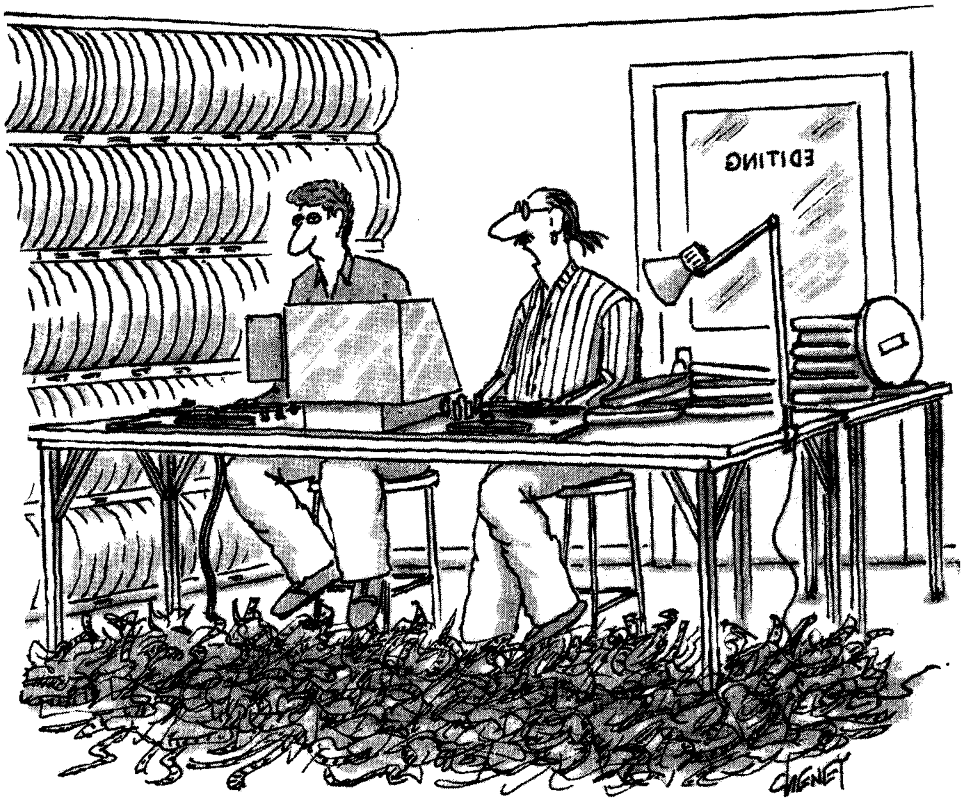
KAEL: Yes. Tommy Lee Jones ran off with the picture. He would have run off with "JFK," too, if it hadn't been such a load.

ESPEN: Are you still as committed to Brian De Palma?

KAEL: Yes, of course I am. His "Carlito's Way" has a tired script, and Pacino, good as he is here, has played his role before. But Sean Penn gives one of his sneakily witty performances, and De Palma himself knows how to set up certain kinds of scenes better than practically anybody else ever has. He does sequences that are similar to ones he's done before, but he does them with more ingenuity, more finesse. It may be a while before he does anything again that's as phenomenal as "Casualties of War," but he's one of the few directors who keep developing in technique.

It's one of the frustrations of writing movie criticism that so many of the people who will take the trouble to read reviews have leather-bound tastes. They'll wait in line for the Merchant Ivory "Remains of the Day," but they won't go near a gangster picture even if, in visual terms and in sheer moviemaking skills, it's far more complex. I understand why. Literate people like the literate sound, the commas in place. It all stands for decorousness, for safety. I think they mistake their priggishness for high standards. To be fair, "Remains" is very well acted—I particularly liked Peter Vaughan, who played Hopkins' father—and Ivory has become accomplished at what he does. Even his unvarying pace achieves a dull splendor. But the picture is almost a parody of repression: the culmination of nothing.

See, I put my leanings right out there for you.



"O.K., now, how do we tell them we left it all on the cutting-room floor?"

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ESPEN: A few years ago, you wrote, "The only fresh element in American movies of the eighties may be what Steve Martin, Bill Murray, Bette Midler, Richard Pryor, Robin Williams, and other comedians have brought to them."

KAEL: Yes, I think that's right. When you saw Richard Pryor alone onstage in a concert film, you felt the flipped-out truth of what he was saying. The performers—especially the standup comics crossing over—brought a roughhousing charge to eighties movies. They were as marginal as we felt ourselves to be. (See, there's a "we" that represents the hip audience.) Whatever they were, they weren't square. That's changing. When you see Steve Martin starring in a dull "family" movie like "Father of the Bride" or "Parenthood" or "Housesitter," or Bette Midler in "Beaches" or "For the Boys," you may feel a thud in the chest; and that was a depressingly bad production of "Gypsy" that Midler was in on TV. At one point, I couldn't stand listening to the musical cues anymore, and got up and put a rap CD on.

ESPEN: Which one?

KAEL: Salt-N-Pepa.

ESPEN: Why are you so rough on harmless family comedies?

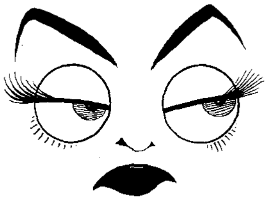
KAEL: I know that sometimes I treat

FROM THE ARCHIVES: 1943

BETTE DAVIS

BY JANET FLANNER

So far as she has been permitted, Bette Davis has molded her film career on her motto, "I love tragedy." Until Pearl Harbor she was the American favorite of the Japanese moviegoers because, they said, she represented the admirable principle of sad self-sacrifice. An adult-minded New Englander, atavistically suspicious of happy endings, she was so convinced by her early Hollywood parts that a floppy feminine hat was a symbol of celluloid sappiness that she later had written into her contract a clause permitting her to refuse to carry a hat in her hand like a damned basket of rosebuds.



Becoming a big star often addles a human being, usually in one of three ways; the victim becomes a superior, lonely ego and stays home, or becomes a public character and goes out constantly, or becomes glamorous, no matter where he or she happens to be. Miss Davis was glamorous, years ago, for about a month. This period ended when, backed up by a smart town car containing a white poodle and liveried chauffeur, and attired in moody black velvet slacks and jacket, she met her mother, who had been on a trip East, at the Los Angeles railway station. Mrs. Davis was unable to believe her own eyes and flatly said so. The glamour was dropped later that day.

It is her notably large eyes, disliked at first by both Hollywood and herself, which finally accelerated her ascent in pictures. When Hollywood at last got around to making analyses, it discovered that eighty per cent of screen acting is concentrated in the eyes. In "Dark Victory" Miss Davis made it one hundred per cent. Since her rôle was that of a woman threatened with insanity, her director wanted her to indicate her disorder by crazed motions of the hands. She decided to use only her eyes. Even the quantity of her erotic appeal, which so worried the studios at the beginning, has been recomputed. When, twelve years ago, a producer said she had no more sex appeal than Slim Summerville, she said he went too far. Now producers go even farther; they say she is solid, ice-cold, Puritan sex, of the type against which the Sunday blue laws had to be passed.

If you ask the Hollywood trade who is the best actress in the business right now, the unanimous, indeed the only fashionable, answer is Davis. The trade adds, *sotto voce*, that her box-office is enormous because men fans are convinced that she is feminine, though she is really only maternal. On a recent War Bond selling tour in the Ozarks and other rural districts, Miss Davis made the perturbing discovery that she scared lots of simple Americans of both sexes. This in turn alarmed her. Some metropolitan theatre critics claim that she seems complex in her rôles because she herself is an unresolved character. On the other hand, émigrés from Europe feel that she should be the dominant member of a great national stock company, like France's Comédie-Française, rather than be allowed to beat out her talent and wings in the movies. Her own idea of an ideal program would be, as she puts it, "to play one good play a winter on Broadway and then photograph it that summer in Hollywood." She will probably always think of the stage when she thinks of a good play, and to her the cinema will undoubtedly remain something done with improved lantern slides. "A movie," she once said, "is not even a dress rehearsal." ♦

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mediocrity as if it were criminal. I don't think I can explain that except with the totality of what I've written. I love low comedy and I love high comedy, and I like mixtures of the two, as in "Soapdish." But when I see entertainers play down to the public—turn wholesome—I want to cry foul.

ESPEN: What do you think about the esteem in which Clint Eastwood is now held?

KAEL: As a director? It's a delicious joke—further proof that there's no such thing as objective judgment in the arts. I did think Eastwood's performance in "In the Line of Fire" was one of the best he's ever given, perhaps the best. But when he was fun in his early movies it wasn't because of his acting skill, and now that he has a little skill he's lost the spaghetti sexiness that made him fun. He's all sinews. He has become a favorite of intellectuals just when he's losing his mass audience. It has to be a consolation prize.

ESPEN: I don't think anyone before you had talked about movies the way you did. I'm thinking of things like the line in your Goings On note for "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"—"No one else can balance the ups and downs of wistful sentiment and corny humor the way Capra can—but if anyone else should learn to, kill him."

KAEL: I literally, physically, can't respond to that stuff the way some people do. Loving movies is a very peculiar love-hate relationship. I mean, you love what they can be, but you also love the crap they are. I have my limits, though.

ESPEN: You also loved jazz, and I've always associated the unsentimental, fast, cool appreciation of virtuosity in your writing with jazz.

KAEL: It wasn't conscious, but I think that by temperament I wanted to approximate something of the speed and feeling of jazz.

ESPEN: Did you ever think about becoming a jazz critic?

KAEL: I might have gone in that direction, but I didn't. I love gospel, too, and I'm sort of tickled that I admitted to you that I like rap.

ESPEN: (*Laughs*) Why tickled?

KAEL: Because people find it out of season in someone who will be seventy-five in a few months. They think that I couldn't possibly enjoy the music, that I'm just trying to be a swinger. People are still outraged when I say I like rock. I also like Handel and Purcell and Gluck.

But, God, what I don't like is Broadway show tunes. I love movie musicals, but there's something about the stale Broadway approach! The musicals I love tend to be things like "Singin' in the Rain," "Cabaret," and the M-G-M "Pennies from Heaven." I loved "Little Shop of Horrors" and "Phantom of the Paradise" and "Saturday Night Fever," and other movies that used a little bit of a shiv in them. I'm not crazy about the soft Americana musicals.

ESPEN: The musical seems to me a genre of movies that is, perhaps, at a dead end.

KAEL: But it shouldn't be. We've had the singers, we've had the music. Elvis Presley was trashed early on; most of the rock and soul people weren't used at all. There was about five minutes of Aretha Franklin in "The Blues Brothers"; when Tina Turner did her number in "Tommy" and the camera travelled up her legs, it was like an explosion, but movie producers didn't seem to notice.

ESPEN: I was amazed when I heard that *New Yorker* messengers taking proofs to Mr. Shawn on a Saturday would go up to his apartment and be invited in, and he would be watching "Soul Train."

KAEL: Isn't that great? He loved all of show business. When I turned in my review of Richard Pryor's concert movie, he was overjoyed, because he had worshipped Pryor and had followed his career from the beginning. I mean, he had many sides that didn't come out, really, in the way he ran the magazine. He played terrific jazz piano. But he also had a series of taboos that were part of his creed of good writing.

ESPEN: Did you have confederates at *The New Yorker*, people who encouraged you, and said, "I'm glad you're here," or was it kind of an uphill struggle?

KAEL: When I started to appear in the magazine, some of the writers—the ones whose prose seemed to be rolled like an English lawn—wrote me hideous letters. You know—"Get out of here, with your cowboy boots."

ESPEN: Oh my God.

KAEL: Some of them were from people I had admired—and that was really a shock.

ESPEN: What color were your cowboy boots?

KAEL: I didn't have cowboy boots. I've never had cowboy boots. It was their idea of my writing—trampling manure on the pages of *The New Yorker*.

ESPEN: Well, there is a certain kind of literary sensibility that seems to be profoundly aggrieved by your style.

KAEL: They were—some of them—the kind of people who said they didn't have a TV except in the kitchen, for the maid. That was sort of the approach to movies. E. B. White represented the essence of *New Yorker* style, and I couldn't evoke the movies in that spare, lucid E. B. White language.

ESPEN: Why did you take that break in 1979 and go out to Hollywood?

KAEL: I thought that maybe I was written out—that I needed a change.

ESPEN: But you didn't like it in L.A.?

KAEL: I missed writing. Pictures were opening and nobody was saying the things I wanted to say. I was like a firehouse horse hearing the bell.

ESPEN: There were stories in the press suggesting that you were a failure out there.

KAEL: When I left *The New Yorker*, I had a commitment to give some seminars and lectures at a couple of universities in the South. So I hadn't yet reported for work at the studio when one of the newsweeklies ran an item saying that in my first weeks in Hollywood I'd managed to alienate everyone. That was picked up and elaborated on all over the world: it was what people like to read. The movie people in L.A. treated me incredibly well. I think they were terrified that I was really an Eastern spy, that I was going to write an exposé of some sort.

ESPEN: By 1991, were you afraid you weren't strong enough to find fresh ways of talking about things?

KAEL: It had become too hard for me to go in to New York to see the movies, and my balance was so bad that a few times I fell smack on my face on the sidewalk. But it wasn't just me. Movies by then weren't setting off the kind of sparks in me that they had in the seventies; I didn't think they spoke to what was going on in the country in the way "The Godfather" did, or "Nashville." Wonderful movies turn up, but movie criticism now is often a report on a vacuum.

ESPEN: I always walk out of a theatre nowadays with a deep sense of regret that I'm not going to read what you thought. Which films of the past couple of years do you regret not writing about?

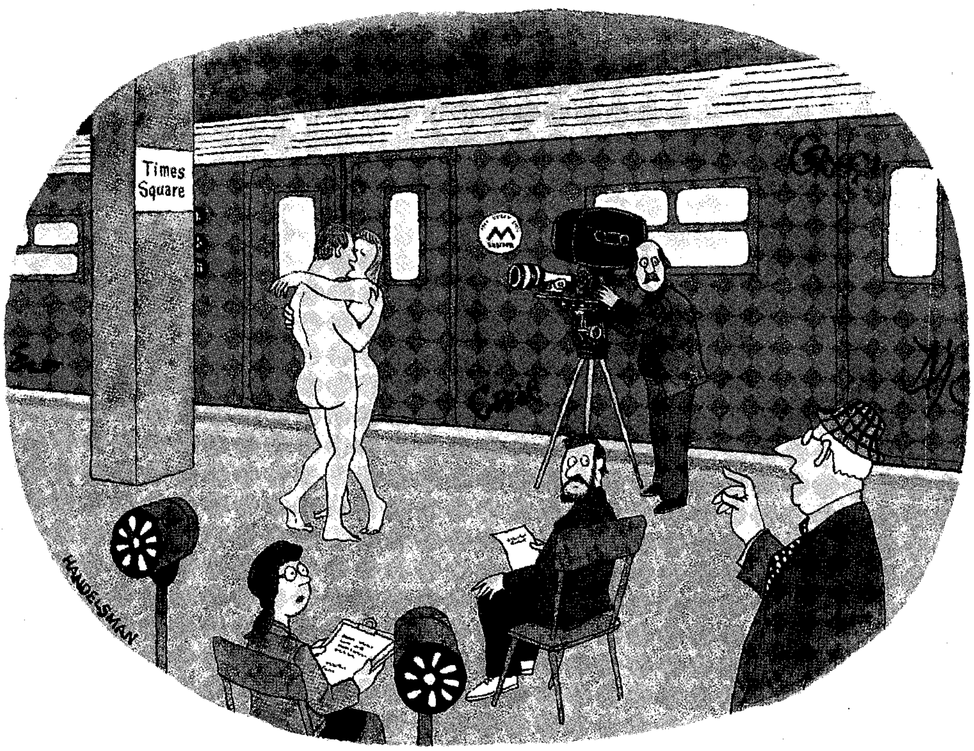
KAEL: "Hearts of Darkness," the documentary that included footage Eleanor Coppola took during the shooting of "Apocalypse Now." It dealt with Coppola's manic-depressive swings. It was like the naked, honest-to-God version of Fellini's "8½." You heard Coppola saying that he didn't know what he was doing, that he was failing, and then heard him convince himself that he'd brought it all off.

I was sorry not to have been able to write about "The Fisher King," because I had often found flaws in Terry Gilliam's work—in the way he overscaled his pictures—and this time he scaled it right, and Robin Williams, Jeff Bridges, Mercedes Ruehl, and Amanda Plummer did great teamwork. That hairy leprechaun Robin Williams talks so fast that what he says hits you like a double take—he and Amanda Plummer are like boy-and-girl Marx Brothers. I'd like to have written about Carl Franklin's small film "One False Move." And there have been little, unimportant pictures that were very satisfying, like "Rambling Rose" and "Diggstown." Soderbergh's "King of the Hill" is a wee thing but nicely detailed.

Lately? Well, two movies I loved. Fred Schepisi and John Guare's "Six Degrees of Separation"—a drawing-room comedy that rises to such heights it becomes a genre of its own. It's amazing that it ever got made. (The ending is a disappointment: you don't want Nora, but you don't want Mary Tyler Moore, either.) And Jim Sheridan's "In the Name of the Father," an Irish movie without any malarkey. It's sane—that's a high compliment—and forceful. And what a situation: a son who doesn't get along with his father is imprisoned with him, and the father monitors everything he does. The movie has substance.

ESPEN: What about "Schindler's List"?

KAEL: I'm not sure there's much more to be said about it. Do I think it's a masterpiece? No. The basic material is great; the movie itself is a very fine melodrama, made with the skills of a superb moviemaker and with deep love. It doesn't have the moral complexities of "In the Name of the Father," but within its limitations it's just about the best of its kind. "Schindler's List" is Spielberg's attempt to be a grownup artist; I hope he won't lose his most inspired side—his access to the child's emotions we all



"I'm from the Transit Authority. O.K. so far, but anything criminal and you're out of here."

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have in us, what came out so strongly in "Jaws" and "E.T."

ESPEN: Are you still gluttonous about movies?

KAEL: Perhaps a little less so than I used to be, but I'm gluttonous about all the arts. When I went dancing, I never wanted to stop. If I start a novel in the evening, I still stay up half the night to finish it, even though I know I'll feel hungover the next day.

ESPEN: What have you been reading?

KAEL: Except for my greater tolerance for pulp on the screen, my taste in books is very similar to my taste in movies. I've been reading a lot of Edna O'Brien and Lee Smith—I just finished her "Fair and Tender Ladies." In its own way, it's almost as good as her novel about country music, "The Devil's Dream." I've just read Anatole Broyard's "Kafka Was the Rage." It's a memoir of life in Greenwich Village in the forties, the memoir of a sensualist and amoralist. Sentence by sentence, it's as beautifully precise as any contemporary American work I know. I laughed out loud at Philip Roth's "Operation Shylock." It's the most daring and, of course, obsessive of his novels. I haven't been startled into laughter like that since "Naked Lunch" came out.

ESPEN: What about nonfiction books about social issues or politics?

KAEL: I tend to read those things more quickly. I slow down for something like Frederick Crews' "The Critics Bear It Away." Crews' gamesmanship is insidious, it's so entertaining. What a good time he has taking scholars apart! But I tend to whip through most nonfiction books; they're often written to be informative, and I read them to be informed. I really love reading writers who care about how the words go together.

ESPEN: Do you read any fiction about movies?

KAEL: I liked Michael Tolkin's book "The Player." It has an anger that's quite different from the movie's lightness of tone. Tolkin got at the conflict between the executives and the writers in a mean, funny way.

ESPEN: About "The Player"—what happened when the novel was made into a movie?

KAEL: The book is about how writers are mistreated, and Robert Altman is notoriously not interested in writers or fidelity to writers. He turned it into an amused satire of Hollywood. The fact that the writer—the wrong writer—got it in the neck seemed a minor matter. The movie itself is minor—enjoyably so.

ESPEN: Are there any young writers you've particularly admired in the last few years?

KAEL: I liked "My Appearance" and "Lyndon," two of the stories by David Foster Wallace in his collection "Girl with Curious Hair." "My Appearance," the one about the actress scheduled to be a guest on David Letterman, is very distinctive.

ESPEN: What was it about?

KAEL: The woman's husband was worried about what would happen to her, whether Letterman would cut her to ribbons, and it's a legitimate fear. On talk shows, you never know what you're up against.

ESPEN: Have you had bad experiences?

KAEL: Generally, it's been a disaster for me. I've been put in false positions, asked vacuous questions, most likely by an edgy, hostile host, and accused of liking only highbrow European films or violent American pictures.

ESPEN: I guess I don't need to ask if you'll be doing TV interviews for the new book.

Onward. People have criticized you for being an amoral sensualist.

KAEL: Just what I love Broyard for.

ESPEN: And people say that you have an obsession with violence and sex, and that you have a dirty mind.

KAEL: The better to write about movies. As for violence, I have a wonderful quotation from Tolstoy.

ESPEN: Was that the one that you had pinned up in your office at *The New Yorker*?

KAEL: Yes. Now I have it at home. The paper has yellowed. He said this in 1908, on the eve of his eightieth birthday: "*I am seriously thinking of writing a play* for the screen. I have a subject for it. It is a terrible and bloody theme. I am not afraid of bloody themes. Take Homer or the Bible, for instance. How many bloodthirsty passages there are in them—murders, wars. And yet these are the sacred books, and they ennoble and uplift the people. It is not the subject itself that is so terrible. It is the propagation of bloodshed, and the justification for it, that is really terrible!"

As I see it, there are the moviemakers

who use violence for a turn-on; they put you on the side of the bullies. Examples: The rape scene in "A Clockwork Orange." The emotionless killing in the "Dirty Harry" films, such as "Magnum Force." The gory opening of "Wild at Heart." Then there are the moviemakers who sensitize you to what violence does to its victims. Classic examples: "Grand Illusion," "Casualties of War." I think it's the job of a reviewer to make the moral difference clear and to try to make it clear that some movies—such as "The Wild Bunch"—blur the distinction. There are also movies that use violence for casual, bang-bang effects; most action films do. They're childish—pre-moral—and a lot of people enjoy that freedom from judgment. What I'm getting at is that violence has a whole range of meanings; simply to condemn it is mindless.

ESPEN: People in the government also jump on the incessant quality of it. You know, the fact that violence is a convention and that you just absorb so much of it.

KAEL: I don't know what to say about that. I don't have the answers.

ESPEN: People asked me about asking you to handicap the Oscars.

KAEL: Phooey.

ESPEN: It holds no interest for you?

KAEL: It goes against the grain of what I think criticism should be. I mean, trying to dope out what the big winners will be.

ESPEN: What about how an Oscar might affect or help an actor's or actress's career?

KAEL: This is why I've stayed off television.

ESPEN: You once wrote, "It says something about the nature of movies that people don't say they like them, they say they love them." It's safe to say, isn't it, that you still love them?

KAEL: Yes.

ESPEN: Then, if you feel you can't write, why shouldn't you do monthly interviews?

KAEL: Because it's not the same. This is just off the top of the head—it's not like giving yourself to a subject.

ESPEN: Do you feel that you're in a painful predicament now?

KAEL: Getting old isn't fun, despite Betty Friedan's thesis. She must have a fantastic constitution.

ESPEN: To assert that it's a wonderful new stage of life?

KAEL: Balls. ♦

BEHIND THE CAMERA

NIGGAZ WITH LATITUDE

Allen and Albert Hughes, the twenty-one-year-old directors of "Menace II Society," want to make one thing clear: they don't fit into any mold.

BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

THE scariest movie of last year wasn't "Jurassic Park," and it wasn't "Friday the 13th Part Whatever." It was "Menace II Society," which depicts a black urban badlands where bored adolescents shoot to kill, and to kill time. Filmed in an almost documentary manner, the violence seems both over-the-top and unremarkable—and, above all, real. You don't know whether you're watching a nightmare or the nightly news. This is the uncanny achievement of the Hughes brothers, Allen and Albert, who co-produced and directed the film. They are now twenty-one years old, and are the children of an Armenian mother and an African-American father. The film critic David Denby heralded the film's release as "perhaps the most striking directorial debut in the history of black cinema," a remarkable claim to make for a barely postadolescent duo working in a field comprising, among recent luminaries, John Singleton and Spike Lee, and in a genre—the gangster movie—already well trodden and convention-ridden. Few would have predicted that when *Variety* published its annual Profit Chart for 1993 "Menace II Society," which grossed nearly twenty-eight million dollars on a budget of three and a half million, would show up as the fifth most successful film of the year in terms of cost-to-return ratio.

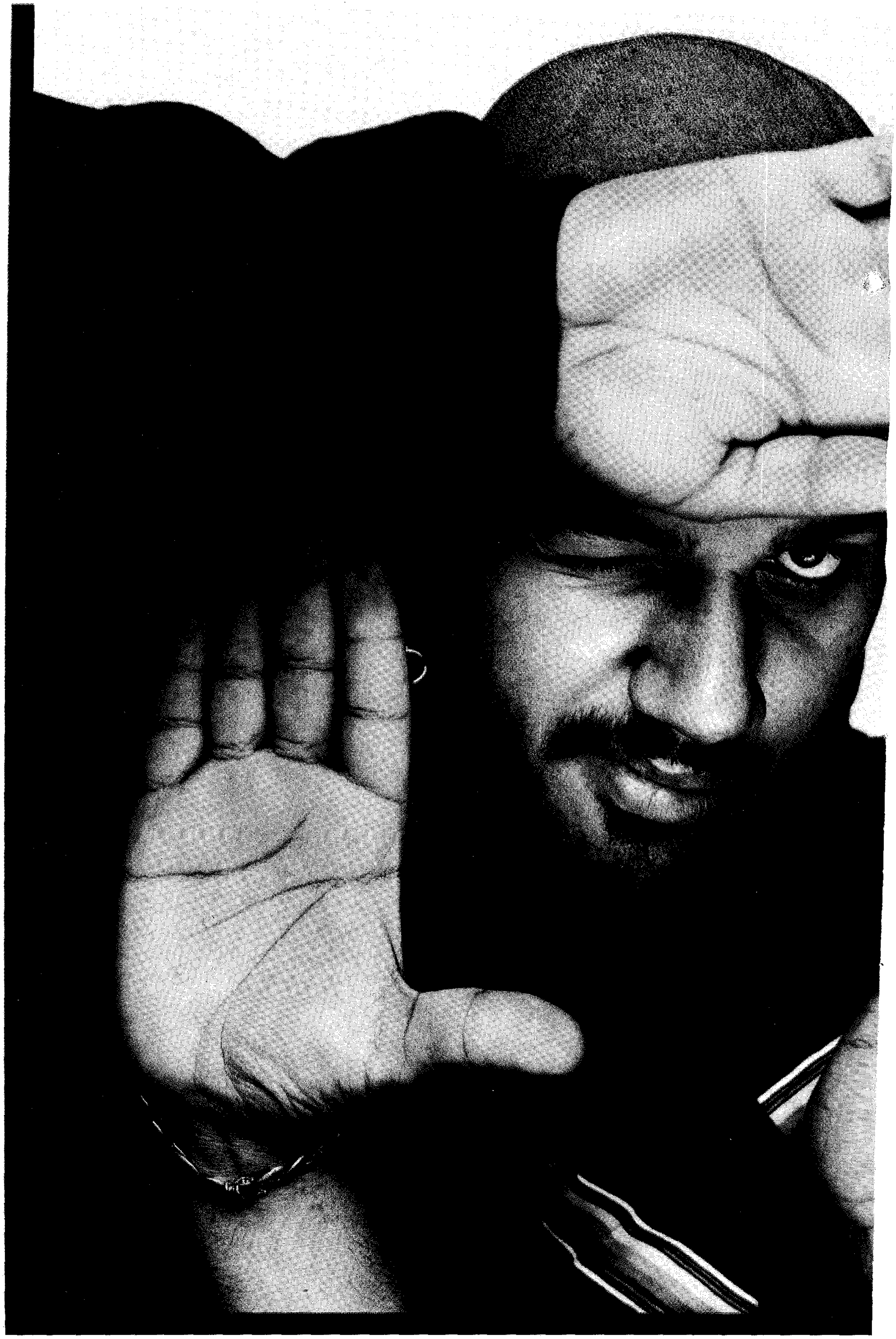
It's been a triumphant but not untroubled time for the Hughes brothers, whom I met last month at Studio 7070 in Hollywood. The twins have found their reception among some of their peers less than welcoming. Maybe part of the trouble, they admit, was invited: when it comes to black cinema, they're not exactly sitting in the Amen Corner. "We're everybody's worst critics," Albert says. Spike Lee "needs to go to ending school"; Matty Rich's much hyped début feature, "Straight Out of Brooklyn," was "the worst piece of shit I've ever seen." And don't get them started on John Singleton.

Yes, this is a New Jack dissing match. But the words are curiously without malice: they're offered in the spirit of those ritualized black insult games—"playing the dozens," it's called on the street—where the participants swap ever more imaginative references to "yo' mamma." The Hugheses are like prizefighters snapping the elastic of their trunks and goading their rivals with colorful put-downs. (Float like a butterfly, sting like a b-boy.) They're fighting to define a space for themselves within the competitive world of the Hollywood studios and within their even more competitive peer group of young, ambitious black filmmakers.

"There's a nigga in New York named Spike. There's a nigga in L.A. named John," Albert explains. "Where's the next nigga going to come from? John was like 'L.A. is *mine*.' And then we pop up and it's like 'Oh, shit, I got to kick those motherfuckers down.' "

Allen, who's clearly the more talkative twin, is in a festively multicolored striped shirt and Girbaud jeans; Albert's wearing a hooded navy sweatshirt and Levi's. Their heads are shaved in that Michael Jordan back-to-your-roots style. When they direct, Albert's in charge of the photography and the technical side; Allen is in charge of the acting. But you get a sense of the intimacy of their collaboration from the way they finish each other's sentences.

A few years ago, Arsenio Hall commented that he had detected a new "consciousness of unity in Black Hollywood." But when the Hughes brothers were peddling the script for "Menace II Society," even though they already had a reputation as successful music-video directors for such rap artists as Too Short and KRS-One, all the major studios wanted an established black



Albert and Allen Hughes, photographed by Richard Avedon in Los Angeles, January 14, 1994.

filmmaker to serve as executive producer for their début. (They ended up at New Line.) As the twins recount it, Universal had Spike Lee in mind; TriStar proposed the Hudlin brothers. And Columbia wanted to hitch the Hugheses to John Singleton. What bothered them wasn't the idea of an overseer—Spielberg would have been cool, they say—but the idea of a black overseer: they didn't want to be controlled by somebody who might perceive them as a threat. Allen says, "It's like, can we have our own identity, please?"

Albert himself takes responsibility for starting their ongoing feud with Singleton. In the June 22, 1992, issue of *Daily Variety*, he was quoted as saying two things: first, that he loved "Boyz N the Hood" ("Which I really didn't," he now admits. "I was just being political about it"), and, second, that his movie would make "Boyz" look like "Mary Poppins." That was the first shot across the bow. But never mind how it started. What matters is what the argument came to be about: whether the Hugheses were real enough, hard enough, *black* enough—whether the brothers were, well, *brothers*.

Once, when they were making a music video for the rap artist Tupac Shakur, Singleton visited the set. "We were talking about being young and directing," Albert recalls, "and I said, 'I've got my driver's license to *prove* I'm young.' So I pulled out my license and showed it to him, and it said Claremont, which is a real white area, smack dab next to Pomona, where I grew up. He looked at it and says, 'Claremont, huh?' He made a mental note and gave it right back." Next thing, the Hugheses began seeing snide comments in magazines from Tupac, who is a friend of Singleton's.

It's true that the twins grew up playing with camcorders, not semiautomatics. "We all have our luggage," Albert says cheerfully. "Anybody in the industry is a nerd." The trouble, he says, is that "everybody promotes the movie as being straight from the 'hood, straight from the street, like, 'this is the way it is.' " He shrugs. "This is something that white people want. They want the edginess of black people. But black people don't necessarily have it, either."

"I know a Muslim, I know a middle-class black man who's just *normal.* I know all kinds of people. And they are all respectable black men or women to me," Allen glosses. But, he says, the media are looking for "niggaz," and they want them raw, hard-core, smelling of asphalt.

"Every fucking interview," Albert groans. " 'Where did you guys grow up?' You don't ask Spielberg that shit. You don't ask Tim Burton where he grew up. I happened to find out where Tim Burton grew up. Burbank, O.K.? Does that take artistic credibility away from what he does?"

They're right, of course. As Jam Master Jay of Run-DMC likes to say, it's not where you're from, it's where you're at. And in today's hard-core circles it takes a certain amount of courage to say so.

"Being interracial kids," Allen explains, "we look at life on both sides of the fence." But there are limits to this kind of ecumenicism: you won't hear the

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THE GARBO INDEX

My dead friend Vito praised Garbo's last scene in "Queen Christina"—
the closeup uncomprehended gays stared into, seeking dissolution.
I remember Vito eating pizza at my table in the Village, 1986.
He removed the sausage nuggets, placed them at plateside.

"I don't eat pork," he said: H.I.V.-positive precautions.
He was watching his system, as we were watching our own systems,
and are, to this day, watching. The last time I saw Vito entirely well
he was wearing pearls on his bare chest, high tea, the Pines—

never my scene. Who co-stars in "Romance"? Can't ask Vito.
When he was alive, I never helped him very much, and now he's
beyond telephone—waiting with Garbo
by the schoolyard's huddled ailanthus, waiting for the fire drill to end.

Four new Passover questions. Am I a child or an adult?
Am I a creature of memory or of action?
If I knew I were to die tomorrow, would I phrase this question differently?
Is it valedictory to write about Vito, or is it vanity?

My life is small, formal, and walled, and around every vista
I contain, imagine black shutters, the limits that Garbo
decreed must flank the lens filming her face in closeup,
so she could see only the camera's eye, without distracting leading man and crew.

Her life, if indexed, could yield surprises,
as could any life, if indexed, if reprieved.
Sea glass, Garbo's collection of. Camellias, Garbo's paradisiacal.
Grotto, Garbo's imaginary. Ghost, Garbo's.

Once, Garbo was whispering secrets of performance
in a bandaged voice, and I was listening, and no toxins in the field
of vision arose to violate the soliloquy, unfolding
with the tranquillity of all final compositions.

—WAYNE KOESTENBAUM

Hugheses’ publicist say that they’re poised to be the most bankable Armenian crossover act since Cher. This is America, land of the one-drop rule of race, and street sells. That’s how they market you, and that’s how you market yourself: I’m not a nigga, but I play one on TV.

“Realness” is a game the Hughes brothers are willing to play as long as they know it’s only a game. But they’re annoyed that they’re constantly compared with every other African-American with a camera. The contemporary filmmaker with whom they do seem to have stylistic affinities is Quentin Tarantino, who broke through in 1992 with the low-budget, high-powered “Reservoir Dogs,” a brutal updating of the classic gangster film. But they sense that it’s easier for film execs to take him seriously. Tarantino, as they see it, is lionized as a genius. By contrast, Albert says, “they’ve embraced us as their little pets, like they always do niggers.”

Allen makes a face, but he’s more resigned than petulant. “When we’re going into these studios, I don’t think they look at us as filmmakers. They look at us like thirty per cent filmmaker and seventy per cent trophy or novelty item.”

I’m reminded of Dr. Johnson’s notorious line about dogs who walk on their hind legs and women who preach: it’s not that they do it well but that they do it at all.

THE twins *do* do it well, though, and that matters. The film’s principal influences were other films—both versions of “Scarface” and Scorsese’s “GoodFellas”—but they also conducted research among trigger-happy gang members in South Central L.A. and friends in Pomona. Allen asked one young murderer what he was thinking when he pulled the trigger: “Did you see him drop? When the blood came out, what were you doing then, when you were going ‘whomp’? I asked about every little step, and he said, ‘I went home, I laid down, went to sleep. Didn’t lose one wink.’ ” The film gets at the way the ghetto has become the social equivalent of what scientists refer to as a “black hole”; it’s a place where the American id collapses in on itself. As the film’s narrator says of his partner, O-Dog, “He was the craziest nigga alive. America’s nightmare. Young, black, and didn’t give a fuck.”

“Menace II Society” is unusually self-conscious about the issue of violence and its representation. After O-Dog kills a Korean grocer, he forces the man’s wife to retrieve the videocassette from the store’s security system and then shoots her, too. Both murders, significantly, occur offscreen. In the days that follow, though, O-Dog screens the videotape of his murder for the amusement of his friends, over and over again. (“I’m gonna be a big-ass movie star!” he exclaims.) This is the film within the film, and the uneasy pleasure of the spectacle ultimately implicates us, the audience. It is the film’s most impressive achievement.

Yet—as was evident in the recent uproar about the California high school students who burst into laughter during “Schindler’s List”—audiences are not always obedient to a filmmaker’s intentions. The Hugheses were spooked by the cheers and laughter that greeted some of their film’s brutality. “That’s not what we wanted,” Albert says. “But black people look at films differently from white people. . . . They take it more easy; they know it’s a film.”

The brothers’ flair for ultraviolence isn’t the only thing that worries their admirers. Some people in town fret about the overnight-auteur syndrome: one hit film and you’re an artiste. The twins are sensitive to this, and it annoys them when the work of a black filmmaker is as absurdly overpraised as Matty Rich’s “Straight Out of Brooklyn.” “And this is what they’re gauging us against!” Allen says, shaking his head. “O.K., gauge me against Scorsese, Spielberg, so I can be better. So I can strive to be that.”

Nelson George—a prominent black critic, screenwriter, sometime producer, and, most recently, novelist, who is familiar with the shorts and music videos that the Hughes brothers made before “Menace”—takes an upbeat view of their potential. He says, “Critics make a mistake in thinking ‘gangsta’ is of a piece. These are all urban-male stories, but they’re as different stylistically as ‘Native Son’ and ‘Invisible Man.’ Matty Rich is Bigger Thomas with a camera. John Singleton is actually a better writer than filmmaker, and his future is as a writer.” He’s confident that the Hughes brothers are in it for the long haul. “Their technical mastery puts them way ahead of their celebrated peers in their total understanding of cinema.”

The twins indeed come alive when they start talking about cinematic craft. Their true love is gangster movies, not gangsters, and they’re smart enough to know the difference. What got them interested in the subject of the drug culture wasn’t drugs but Brian De Palma’s “Scarface.” Albert’s eyes light up when he talks about swish-pans, not switchblades. Despite what some viewers have imagined, this is not Willie Horton with a Steadicam. And when they talk about “Menace” they’re happily devoid of arrogance. They’re quick to point out aspects of their film that they didn’t like, and reluctant to claim credit for aspects of it that worked well. “The mistakes we made were even better than the original ideas,” Albert says. In fact, there’s an almost dazed tone when they talk about the film’s success: did *I* do that? “That’s the funny thing about film,” Albert adds. “Shit turns out that you never think would turn out.”

“DISNEY’S got the biggest balls in the industry right now,” Albert remarks when we talk about the twins’ new sponsor. They’re settling into a two-picture production deal with Caravan Pictures, Joe Roth’s production company and a Disney affiliate: they’re niggaz with latitude, pleased by the company they’re keeping. In their next film, a caper story set in the late sixties and early seventies—are you ready for this?—they hope to resurrect the culture of the blaxploitation era.

“Back then, it just was a whole groove, and you weren’t worried about political correctness and all that sort of stuff. Today everybody’s so anxious,” Allen says. They regard those few short years in the early seventies that brought us such films as “Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song,” “The Mack,” “Shaft,” “Cleopatra Jones,” “Black Caesar,” and “Superfly” the way the Black Arts generation regarded the Harlem Renaissance. They seem to perceive it as a time of genuineness and shared racial “consciousness,” before the rise of New Jack rivalry and careerism. The brothers are experiencing what one cultural critic has dubbed nostalgia without memory. And though I know it wasn’t as simple as all that back then, I find myself getting a little misty-eyed when Allen tells me he has the album from “Superfly.” (The earth moved for me when I first saw that movie, in West Virginia in 1972, when I was just their age: I daydreamed about straightening my hair, buying an ankle-length mink coat, and trading in my heap for a pimpmobile.)

“I ask my mother, ‘How was “Superfly” when it came out?’ ” Allen says. “And she says, ‘Allen, for us, that movie and that album were like “Jurassic Park” when it came out.’ We want to capture the feel of that time. When you hear Curtis Mayfield, you think seventies, you think lights, you think velvet pants, browns and oranges.”

I’d warn them away from idealizing that era, but that Curtis Mayfield song keeps running through my head: “I’m your mama, I’m your daddy; I’m that nigger in the alley.”

“People can say what they want to about blaxploitation,” Albert tells me, warming to the subject. “Spike has gone on for years about blaxploitation and how he hates it, and I walked through his office and all he has is posters of blaxploitation.”

I’ve never been sure exactly what happened to the blaxploitation era. Maybe people just got tired of movies where all the leads had names like Goldie and Slim. But, as Nelson George has pointed out, there’s a kind of harmonic convergence between blaxploitation and contemporary “hard-core” hip-hop. Years after the industry declared the trend dead, many of those films continued to play in urban theatres, and video has given them a new lease on life. (Russell Simmons, arguably rap’s leading impresario, can recite the dialogue from whole scenes of “The Mack.”) The official institutions of black uplift hated those movies, but to those of us who lined up to watch them they were a heady, empowering experience.

Even if the term itself was something of a put-down, coined by the white industry, I’m sold on the idea of reclaiming it. Allen says, “All of Spike’s films have been blaxploitation films, all our films in the future are going to be blaxploitation films, all of John’s films are going to be blaxploitation films, because they make money.” Or, as an album title by the great R. & B. eccentric Swamp Dogg has it, “I’m Not Selling Out, I’m Buying In.” ♦

ELEMENTS OF FILM

THE PROJECTOR

For a century, the clickety celluloid-reel projector has been a symbol of the miracle of the movies. It’s also one of the movies’ least-known myths.

BY NICHOLSON BAKER

THE finest moment in “The Blob” (1958) occurs in a small-town movie theatre, during a showing of something called “Daughter of Horror.” While the pre-McLuhanite projectionist reads his hardcover book, the Blob—a giant protean douche bag—begins to urge its heat-seeking toxic viscosity through ten tiny slits in an air vent. Past the turning movie reel, we watch the doomed projectionist glance out the view-port at the screen, preparing for a “changeover”—an uninterrupted switch from the running projector, whose twenty-minute reel is almost over, to the second, idle one, which is all threaded and ready to roll. He senses something at his back; he turns; he gives the flume of coalesced protoplasm a level look—then it gets him. Now unattended, the first projector plays past the cue for the changeover and runs out of film. The disgruntled audience looks around and spots the Blob (in an image that must have inspired the development of the Play-Doh Fun Factory) extruding itself in triumph from all four of the little windows—two projector ports and two view-ports—in the theatre’s rear wall.

Chuck Russell’s remake of “The Blob” (1988) brings every detail, or almost every detail, of the first film neatly up to date. The movie-within-a-movie is now entitled “Garden Tool Massacre.” “Isn’t it awfully late to be trimming the hedges?” a camp counsellor mutters while making out with his girlfriend, having noticed a masked stranger at work on the shrubbery after dark. “Wait a minute,” he then says, suspicions aroused. “Hockey season ended months ago.” Cut to the booth, where “Hobbs,” the bored projectionist (whose life will indeed prove to be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”), his head again seen past a turning reel of film, reads a magazine and fiddles left-handedly with a yo-yo. The second-generation Blob, far peppier and more enterprising than its forebear, pukes its way briskly up the air-conditioning duct and plasters the unhappy Hobbs to the ceiling. Moments later, the manager, looking up, discovers his colleague, a Ralph Steadman grimace on his face, half-consumed in an agony of Handi-Wrap and dyed cornstarch, the yo-yo still rising and falling from his twitching finger.

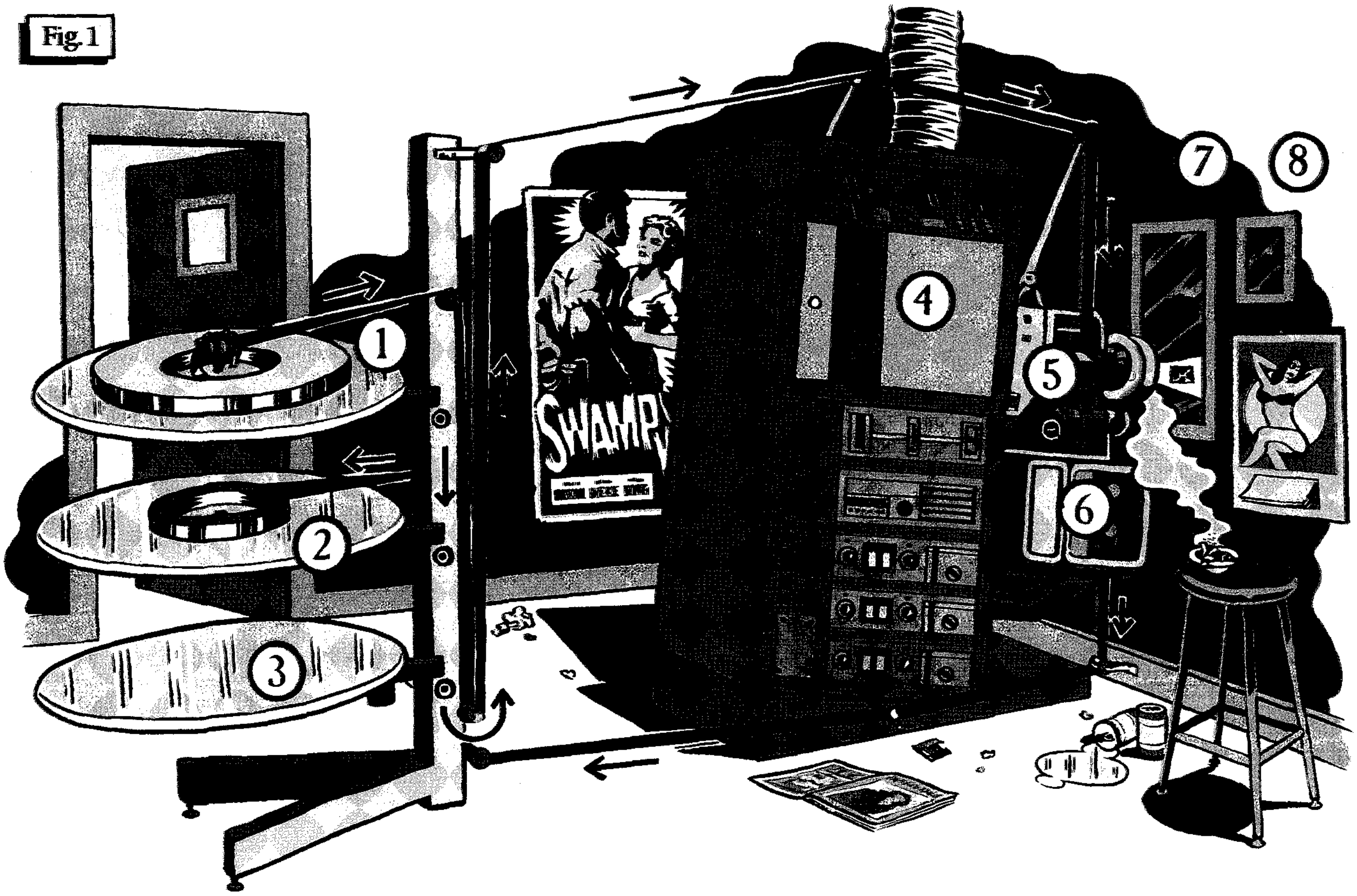
Why the addition of the yo-yo? The student of film technology may wonder. Is it merely a gratuitous prop, or does it tell us something? I suspect that the yo-yo is a reference to the classical principle of the movie reel, which repeatedly rewinds and relinquishes its length of film. The reason Mr. Russell had the iconography of the movie reel very much on his mind in shooting this scene, I think, is that, despite all his diligent updating of cultural references, and despite the elaborate verisimilitude of the movie’s gruesomeness, he was not quite able to bring himself to reveal to us the reality of modern theatrical-movie projection. For the terrifying reality is that *film is no longer projected from reels.*

Film is projected from platters. The platter system (Fig. 1), first invented by a German projectionist, Willie Burth, and perfected by Norelco, in the Netherlands, about twenty years ago, works this way: The film arrives from the distributor on five or six reels in an octagonal steel suitcase. The projectionist splices the film from these reels together, winding it in one big spiral onto one of (typically) three horizontal circular steel disks, each roughly four feet in diameter. When the projectionist wants to set up a show, he pulls the beginning of the film from the middle of the platter, threads it through the platter’s central “brain” (its lumpily massed rollers look somewhat cerebral), thence around a few guide rollers screwed into the wall or the ceiling, and loads it into the sprockets of the projector. After it passes through the “gate” (where it is actually projected), the film usually travels through the sound head (where a light reads the optical soundtrack), loops around several more guide rollers, and ends up being wound in another huge spiral on one of the other horizontal platters. Because the film leaves from the middle of the platter, instead of the outside, rewinding between shows, reel by reel, is no longer necessary. And each theatre needs only one projector per screen, rather than the traditional tag-team alternating two.

There are a few revival houses in Los Angeles and New York that continue to show films on two projectors from reels, but the vast majority of the country's theatres—art houses and mall-plexes alike—currently employ the platter system, and have for the past decade. Yet of the projector-movies from this period that I have seen (movies that include a moment or two in a contemporary projection booth, I mean), not one—not Chuck Russell's "Blob" or Joe Dante's "Gremlins" (1984: gremlins invade theatre and play Reel 4 of "Snow White"), or "Night of the Comet" (1984: couple spend night in steel-firewalled projection booth and escape being turned into red dust or killer maniacs by comet), not Susan Seidelman's wonderful "Desperately Seeking Susan" (1985: we'll get to this one later) or "Gas, Food, Lodging" (1992: girl falls for Chicano projectionist)—dares give us a glimpse of a turning platter. I was sure, having read a description (in Carol J. Clover's thoughtful book "Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film") of a despicable Italian zombie movie called "Demons" (1985), that, because its action—fountains of pus and helicopter-blade disembowellings—is set within a fully automated and (of course) transcendently evil movie theatre, with an unmanned projection booth, and because the second-largest manufacturer of movie projectors in the world happens to be Milan's Cinemeccanica, that at least here, in this admittedly unsavory setting, we would be shown something approaching the technical truth about movie projection. But no: although the demonic equipment blinks with a few more lights than usual, it is fitted with the familiar pairs of reels up front.

These lapses of realism probably have more to do with iconographic inertia than with any sort of conspiracy or coverup on the part of movie people. It isn't that "they" don't want us to know that the friendly century-old reel of celluloid, the reel that has fuelled a million puns and that more than any other image means movies to us, has been superseded by a separate triple-tiered mechanism that, while full of visual interest, and quite beautiful in its indolent, wedding-cake-on-display sort of way, is less intuitively comprehensible than its predecessor. Hollywood producers don't care whether we are aware that the platter system reduced the participatory role of the projectionist and helped make the multiplex theatre financially attractive. (The eighteen-screen Cineplex Odeon in Los Angeles, for example, requires only two projectionists at any one time, and the twenty-six-screen complex in

Fig. 1



On the top platter (1) film unfurls from the inside out. and winds up on the middle platter (2). The lowest platter (3) is a spare, used for a second feature. The canted console (4), containing the xenon lamphouse and sound equipment, aims the image from the projector (5) through the glass projector port (7), and onto the screen. In the soundhead (6), a solar cell interprets the soundtrack. The projectionist (not shown) keeps an eye on image quality through the view-port (8).

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK ZINGARELLI

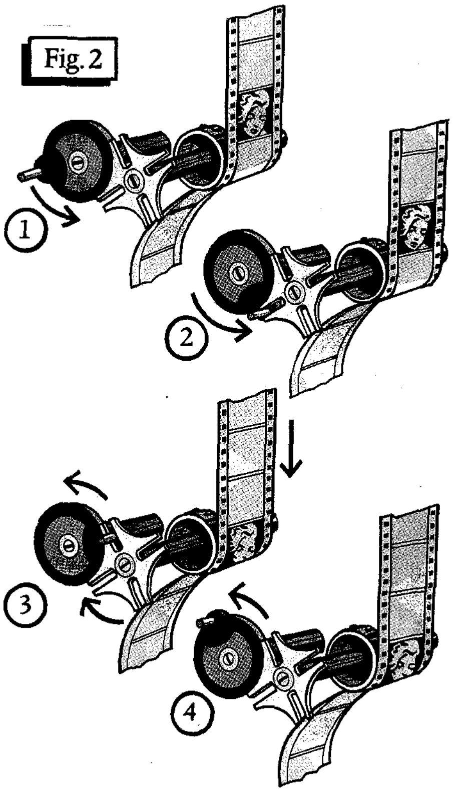
Brussels is comfortably tended by eight.) Nor do they care whether or not we know that platter hardware is, according to some critics, rougher on a movie print than reel-to-reel projection was.

"The platter is death to film," Dr. Jan-Christopher Horak, the senior curator of films at the George Eastman House, in Rochester, told me. A print now must twist a hundred and eighty degrees on its axis as it completes the large open-air loop that leads from the feed platter through the projector to the takeup platter; this subjects it, Horak says, to a kind of helical stress that film stock has not previously had to withstand. He has been finding "strange stretch marks that aren't vertical, as you might expect, but horizontal" on platter-fed films. And the platter system, he says, allows for unattended operation: if a hardy chunk of filth gets caught in the gate of the projector, it can scratch the film for hundreds of feet unremedied. Horak also mentions the lost-frame problem: every time a projectionist "builds" a feature on a platter, he must cut the leaders off each component reel and splice the ends in place; then, when the film is "broken down" at the end of its run, those splices are cut and the leaders reattached for shipping. In the process, each reel loses at least a frame of film. The more theatres a film visits, the shorter it gets.

Dick Twichell—a wise and careful projectionist at a twelve-screen Loew's Theatre complex in greater Rochester, not far from Horak's archival collection—admits that ambient dirt can cause serious trouble now. "Static electricity becomes more of a problem, because the film is out in the open air and attracts dust," he says. The guide rollers, often made of plastic rather than metal, contribute to, rather than dissipate, static. And when a plex theatre does something called "interlocking"—the simultaneous running of a single print through two or even three separate projectors, aimed at different screens—the film can travel hundreds of feet over guide rollers, paying out along the ceiling and returning low, inches from the floor, drawing dust along the way.

On the other hand, Twichell disagrees that the round trip to and from a platter physically overstresses a print. "If that were true, the splices would come apart, and they almost never do," he says. In fact, Twichell, like many in the film industry, is of the opinion that platter hardware is far gentler on prints than reels were. A takeup reel had a primitive clutch: it pulled the film forcibly off the teeth of the projector's lower sprocket, wearing out its perforations: a print would last perhaps three hundred runs, certainly no more than seven hundred, before becoming flimsy and easily torn. Now, on platters, a print can run almost indefinitely without sustaining that sort of mechanical damage. (There is a platter disaster known as a "brain-wrap," but it is relatively rare.) Disney routinely gets ten or twenty thousand showings from a single print in its theme parks; often the dyes in the emulsion fade before the film succumbs.

Fig. 2



The cam turns (1) until the pin engages the Maltese cross (2) giving it a quarter turn and pulling the film down one frame (3). At (4), the pin releases the cross.

Constant rewinding, which platters eliminate, was itself a major source of harm. "Fully nine-tenths of the damage to film comes from the process known as 'pulling down' in rewinding," says the 1912 "Motion Picture Handbook." The rainmarks, as they are called, that distance us from an old Buster Keaton picture, say, were probably made while it was being rewound, not while it was being cranked through the projector. Projectionists were traditionally tinkerers, techies, taciturn isolates with dirty fingernails; of necessity they worked (and still do work, some of them) surrounded by grease pots, oilcans, dirty rags, swapped-out components, and (before xenon bulbs came in, in the sixties) by the stubs of spent carbons from the carbon-arc lamps, each of which lasted no more than half an hour. Chuck McCann, who plausibly plays the hefty, chain-smoking hero of a 1970 film called "The Projectionist" (which is a sort of remake of the 1924 B[illegible]er Keaton movie "Sherlock, Junior": [illegible]e about a projectionist who, do[illegible]off on a stool by one of his machi[illegible]reams that he has entered the film t[illegible]ne is showing), gets angry at Rodney [illegible]angerfield (the manager) and slams a reel of film onto the rewinder, cranking hard and maintaining tension by resting his palm on the reel. The more brute film handling—rewinding, threading, splicing—that the typical projectionist was forced to do, the more beat-up the film became.

"The Projectionist" is filled with fun snippets from old movies, as is "Cinema Paradiso" (1989), a horribly sentimental Italian creation that is nonetheless accurate in portraying the local projectionist, rather than any director or studio head, as the person with the final cut. "Cinema Paradiso" 's previewing priest rings a bell any time people kiss onscreen, and the projectionist dutifully marks the moment in the reel with a strip of paper, so that he can remove the kiss later. In truth, though, projectionists, at least in the United States, were more likely to be furtive editors and clip-collectors on their own (as the creators of "The Projectionist" seemingly were) than on behalf of local censors: they would simply cut out a few feet, or a frame or two, of an image or a sequence they liked. Commonly, they collected "favorite movie stars, and especially scenes or shots that had pieces of female anatomy in them," Horak told me; the Eastman House now owns some of these collections. One projectionist told me that if you cut two frames from a scene where a camera is dollied sidewise, and you then view these frames through a stereoscope, you can simulate 3-D. After years in the projection business, this man has lost all interest in watching movies, and he has cancelled HBO and Cinemax, but he continues to accumulate 3-D frames. He cuts them out, he hastened to say, only if they appear in a trailer, or at the front or back of a reel, where frames are meant to be lost anyway. Other projectionists may be less ethical. It could well be that hands-off platter automation helps projectionists resist the powerful temptation to keep souvenirs from the films that pass through their theatres.

Even with automation, though, there is a fair amount of under-the-hood maintenance connected with tending a projector. Early in "The Inner Circle" (1991), Tom Hulce, who plays Stalin's projectionist, plucks something from his shirt pocket.

"What's that you're poking in the projector?" asks the alarmed K.G.B. official.

"Toothbrush," Hulce says. "Very convenient for cleaning. I always carry one with me."

The K.G.B. man studies it, sniffs it. "The old projectionist never had anything like that," he says, impressed.

Recently, after the last show of the night of "The Remains of the Day," I watched Stephan Shelley, senior projectionist at the Grand Lake Theatre, in Oakland, California, clean the vitals of one of his eight projectors with a pale-blue Colgate toothbrush. ("A clean, used toothbrush is ideal," advises the user's manual for the current Century MSC-TA 35-mm. projector with self-turning lens turret.) Shelley greases the rods and gears of his Century projectors every morning; he uses rubbing alcohol and Q-Tips on the equipment daily as well; and he keeps a vigilant eye on the level of the oil bath in the all-important intermittent movement. (Seventy-millimetre film, he says, which has a magnetic rather than an optical soundtrack, leaves a projector especially dirty, because ferrous particles from the magnetic strip come off in the machine.) Fully cross-trained, he also fixes popcorn poppers when they break. There are occasional reports of projectionists less knowledgeable than Shelley who, having run out of projector oil, resort in desperation to pouring popcorn butter in the machines to keep them from freezing up. This practice voids the warranty, however.

Besides platters, the other notable recent development in projectorware is the aforementioned xenon bulb, a two-thousand-watt, foot-long, thousand-dollar item that illuminates a film by sending eighty amperes of direct current through a quartz envelope containing ten atmospheres of excitable xenon. It makes a B-movie sort of zap when it comes on. Through a tiny green portal in the lamphouse, you can peer in on it and watch it radiating away, cooled by indefatigable fans. It, too, caused a flutter of dissent when first introduced: charged xenon was said to produce a noticeably harsher, bluer light than the glowing carbon tips of the arc lamp did. Also, bulbs occasionally "fail violently" (i.e., explode), damaging the focussing mirror in the lamphouse. But the arc lamp gave off toxic fumes, and it was moody: movies were especially luminous on windy days, when the exhaust chimneys drew better and the carbons consequently burned brighter. Objections to xenon have pretty much died down; the only legitimate gripe the moviegoer can make now is that when a bulb fails, even nonviolently (this usually happens after about two thousand hours of service), it takes a while to alert someone in the theatre and get the projector stopped, and, since platters can't be reversed, the audience will miss the stretch of the movie that ran with sound and no picture.

WE now know more of the projector's earliest history, thanks to Christopher Rawlence's recent book "The Missing Reel: The Untold Story of the Lost Inventor of Moving Pictures." It was the movie projector, not the movie camera, that gave early visionaries trouble, since the projector must hold each frame still longer, and must snap to the next frame faster, than a camera does when it exposes film. The original invention, defined as an affair of toothed sprockets that engage with a flexible perforated band carrying sequential images, probably ought to be attributed to Louis Aimé Augustin Le Prince (1841-1890?), a ceramicist and enameller who worked in Leeds. Le Prince filed the relevant patent in 1886 but disappeared several years later, days before he was to leave for the United States with a crated demo model of his epochal "deliverer." That Thomas Edison's lawyers had him killed, Rawlence suggests, is unclear.

Edison, tireless and shrewd in his appropriation of other people's work, unsurprisingly claimed sole authorship of the "Vitascope," but he and his projector-development team had done little more than slap the Wizard's name on a machine actually built by Thomas Armat, a Washington inventor, which incorporated principles conceived by Le Prince. Armat's historic hand was working the crank when, on April 23, 1896, the screen at Koster & Bial's Music Hall, on West Thirty-fourth Street, wowed journalists with the "Perfect Reproduction of Noted Feminine Figures and Their Every Movement."

Early projectionists in the wake of Armat were inventors and repairmen, but they were also performers, interpreting the emotional tone of a film by varying the film speed. "The really high-class operator, who produces high-class work on the screen, must and will vary his speed to suit the subject being projected," F. H. Richardson's 1912 textbook advised. For example:

> . . . as a rule solemn scenes will be improved if the machine turns slowly. Take, for instance . . . the Pathé Passion Play; probably the Bible patriarchs in real life actually moved as fast as anyone else. They may have, upon occasion, even run. Nevertheless rapid action does not suit our preconceived notions of such things. I have of-

> ten seen the Pathé Passion Play run at such enormous speed that the characters were jumping around the screen like a lot of school boys. Such an exhibition was disgusting to the audience and offensive to those of deeply religious inclination and who revere those characters.

Even after the electric motor eased the physical labor of the projectionist, silent film studios often furnished cue sheets along with their prints, which itemized the changes in speed that, like tempo markings on a piano score, were an important part of the experience of films such as "The Birth of a Nation." One of the reasons silent movies can seem so ridiculous now (in addition to the fact that some of them *are* ridiculous, of course) is that they are frequently presented at the fixed, twenty-four-frames-per-second rate adopted for equipment in the late 1920s, in conjunction with the optical soundtrack (the ear can't tolerate changes in speed the way the eye can), rather than at variable rates more in the vicinity of sixteen frames a second, as was conventional until then.

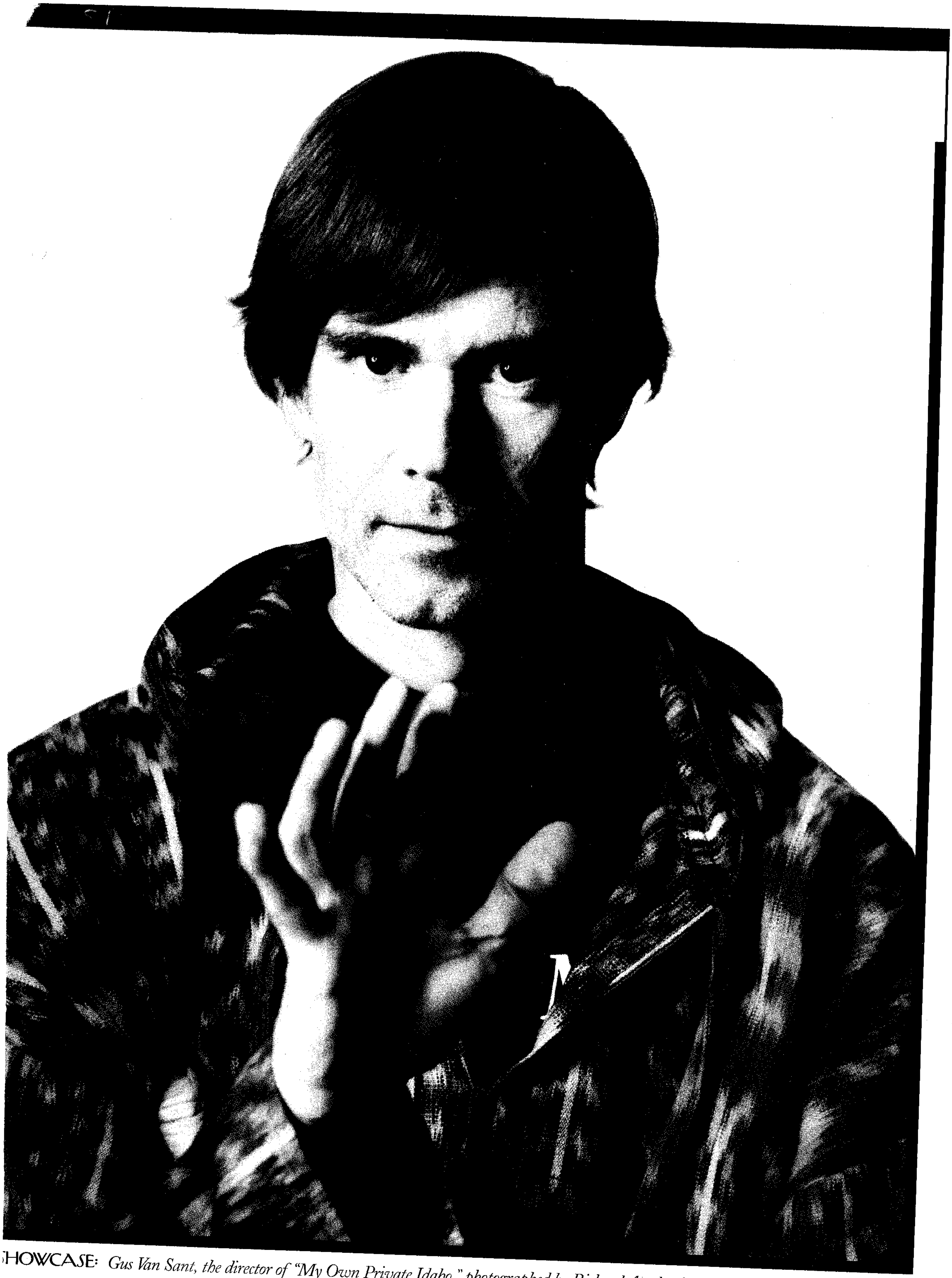
But despite these momentous changes—the stabilization of film speed; sound; Technicolor; the replacement of nitrate-based film with fire-retardant acetate; xenon bulbs; platterization—the really remarkable thing about the evolution of the projector over the past century is how similar in motive essentials a 1994 Simplex machine is to the original Armat/Le Prince design. Film still moves on sprockets with sixteen teeth, and the crucial "intermittent" sprocket—the one that actually stops and starts the film—is still powered, as it was at Koster & Bial's Music Hall, by a lovely piece of precision machinery called the Geneva movement, which was first developed by Swiss watchmakers to prevent springs from being overwound. The Geneva movement has two main pieces: a Maltese cross (or star, or starwheel) and a more pedestrian cam, both of which splash around half-submerged in oil. The pin on the steadily turning cam slips into the slot in the Maltese cross and forces it to rotate a quarter of a turn and then stop dead, immobilized by the cam's circular edge. When the star is stopped, a single immobile image floods the theatre screen for a few hundredths of a second; when it turns, the film advances under cover of shuttered darkness. The moviegoer's brain, hoodwinked by this succession of still lives, obligingly infers motion.

"You know what a Maltese cross is?" an itinerant projector-repairman with questionable toilet habits asks an incompetent projectionist near the end of Wim Wenders' mammoth *film-fleuve*, "Kings of the Road." The projectionist takes a guess: Some kind of drink? The repairman shakes his head sadly and tries to explain it to him. "Without this little thing, there'd be no film industry!" he says. The projectionist is unimpressed, and (because "Kings of the Road" is a semi-comprehensible art movie) he casually inhales the flame from a cigarette lighter to close out the scene. But the workings of the true star system, though they may take a moment to grasp (Fig. 2), repay meditation: Seldom has a mechanism so simple, so unexpectedly heraldic, persisted without modification at the center of a ruthless business that has otherwise undergone continuous technical, artistic, and financial upheavals.

The Simplex projector, which many hold to be the finest, is built in Omaha by a company called Ballantyne, which also makes theatrical spotlights and high-tech chicken cookers. The Maltese cross *within* the Simplex projector, however, is manufactured in Glendale Heights, Illinois, the work of a privately held company called LaVezzi Precision Incorporated, run by fifty-one-year-old Al LaVezzi. Al LaVezzi's grandfather, Edward LaVezzi, got his start, during the First World War, by milling the worn teeth off projector sprockets and sweating new brass ones on. Now, in a sort of benevolent monopoly, LaVezzi's company makes sprockets and intermittent movements for Simplex, Century, and Ballantyne projectors (all three brands are co-owned, and based in Omaha), and also for several companies in Europe and Asia, and for Christie, Incorporated projectors made in Cypress, California. For Christie, LaVezzi developed a sealed, belt-driven intermittent movement, alluringly called the Ultramittent, that never needs oiling. LaVezzi Precision is also responsible for the legendary VKF sprocket—the Very Kind to Film sprocket, that is—whose teeth are smoothed in meaningful ways by computer-controlled four-axis machining centers. The manufacture of the VKF sprocket is a "no-brainer," however, according to Mr. LaVezzi, compared to making the Maltese cross, where serious flaws are measured in millionths of an inch. "The slot of a star has to be perfect," he says, pronouncing "perfect" with inspiring plosiveness.

Will there always be intermittent sprockets, and the projectors they serve, at work in the world? Will later generations of movie watchers know how similar a projector sounds to an idling VW Beetle? Will they, when viewing that superb early scene in Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times," realize that, though Chaplin is ostensibly dragged down into the bowels of a huge "Electro Steel Corp." machine, he is really miming a piece of flexible film and threading himself through the sprockets of a movie projector? I've watched quite a few projector-movies recently (including one that I haven't been able to splice in anywhere here, called "The Smallest Show on Earth," in which Peter Sellers plays an old projectionist who disrupts a Western when he gets drunk in the booth), but I watched every one of them on videotape. I paused, rewound, fast-forwarded, played, and paused again so much in studying the last scene of "Desperately Seeking Susan," for instance (Aidan Quinn kisses Rosanna Arquette against a Simplex projector playing a sci-fi movie about mutant attackers—Rosanna's back arrests the winged chariot of the movie reel and the film frame melts on the screen), that the black plastic housing of the rented video gave off an unusually strong and pleasing smell of miniature VCR servomotors and hot printed-circuit boards when I at last, having subjected the lovers' frame-melting embrace to a level of scrutiny it was never meant to bear, ejected it.

But that single 35-mm. rectangle of color film contains, it is estimated, the equivalent of forty megabytes of digital information: forty megabytes, the contents of an entire small hard disk, in *every frame* of a movie. Even if one assumes all sorts of clever data compression, it is difficult to imagine digital storage systems matching the Van Eyckian resolution of the chemical grains on a strip of 35- or 70-mm. movie film anytime soon. Projectors, and the durably whirling Maltese crosses inside them, may still be around when, in another thirty years, a third, magnificently reimagined "Blob" oozes into the projection area of the local eight-plex and begins stirring up trouble. And by then, perhaps, horror-film makers will be brave enough to show us a few platters. ♦



SHOWCASE: *Gus Van Sant, the director of "My Own Private Idaho," photographed by Richard Avedon in Los Angeles, January 14, 1994.*

A CRITIC AT LARGE

MONDO FELLINI

"8½" is a film about the making of a film that never gets made. It is the late Federico Fellini's 1963 homage to the fascination and the fun of the cinema, and a testament to why the director became the Italian screen's consummate artist in the years when Italy was the center of the film world.

BY CLIVE JAMES

To understand the meaning of *asanisimasa*—a seeming nonsense word that crops up early in Fellini's "8½"—you have to do more than crack a childishly simple code. (Take out the padding and *asanisimasa* contracts to *anima*, the Italian for "soul.") You have to follow the director down a long corridor in an old-fashioned luxury hotel. It is late at night. Along the corridor comes Marcello Mastroianni in the role of Guido Anselmi, a renowned Italian director buckling under the strain of starting work on his latest, make-or-break film before the script is really finished. Guido is wearing a black hat with its sides curled up, he has hangdog bags under his eyes, and his overcoat is draped over his forearm. Surely this is the studied sartorial insouciance of Fellini himself—a clear confession that the director is his own hero. We know who this is. We know what must be going on in his head: anguish, remorse, panic. But without breaking step in his forlorn march he suddenly twists and flicks one foot sidewise while it is in midair, as if he were momentarily attacked by the memory of a dance. Why does he do that?

I first asked myself this question in Florence, in 1963, when "8½" came out. Even in the delighted shock of that first viewing, it was clear that "8½" had dozens of such apparently self-contained moments, enigmatic yet instantly memorable: the squeaky crackle of Guido lying back with languorous angst on a bed heaped with the eight-by-ten glossies of actresses from whom he has to choose the supporting cast; the sheeting that shrouds the scaffolding of the uncompleted rocket ship flapping in the sea wind at night; Guido's father going down into his hole in the ground; the ancient cardinal's face inhaling the steam in the sauna at the spa; Sandra Milo, Guido's airhead mistress, trying to walk in two different directions at once when she spots Anouk Aimée, the terrifyingly poised wife; Guido slumped in the preview theatre in front of the intellectualizing screenwriter who has nagged him beyond endurance and who, in the beleaguered director's imagination, has just allowed himself to be hanged. If you could have stopped the film from moment to moment, it might have looked like any film in which a visually gifted director lights fireworks that will illuminate the darkness of an unilluminating script. But the film established its coherence in the first few minutes and unfolded inevitably. It was a film about an unfinished film—about a film that never even started—and yet it looked and sounded more finished than any film you had ever seen. About a director who didn't know what to do next, it always knew exactly what to do next. It was a cosmic joke.

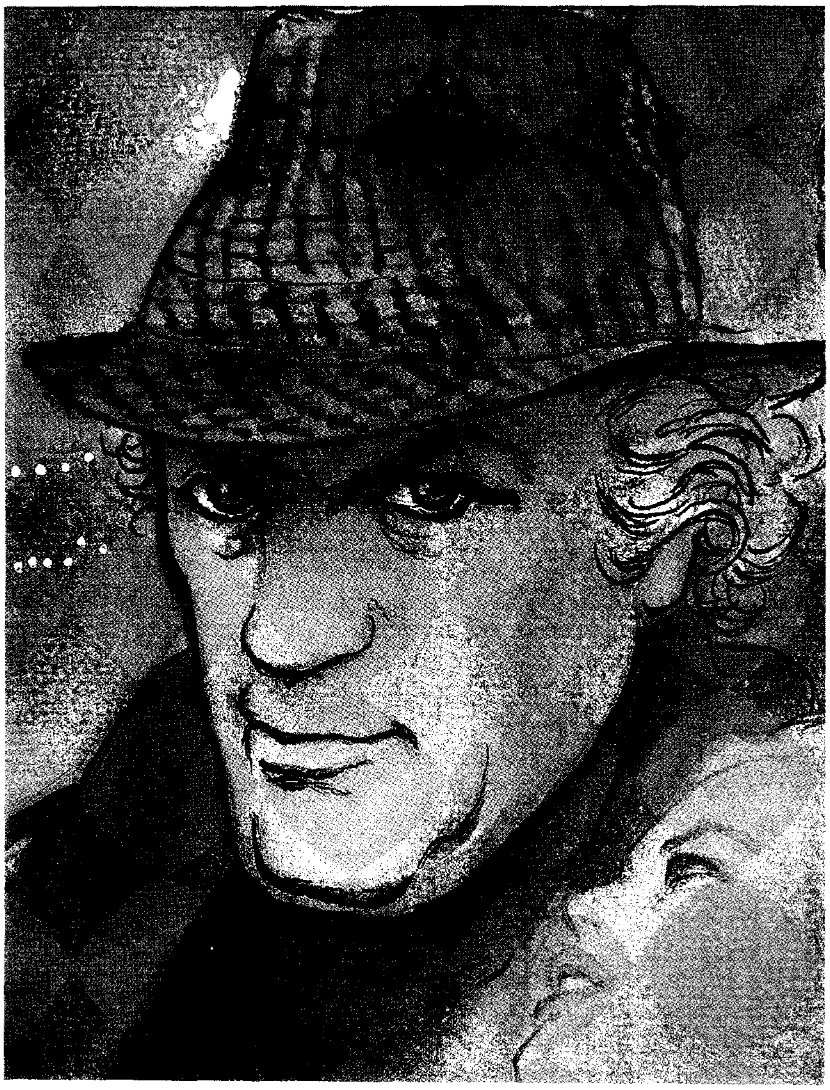
That much I got, though I couldn't understand all the dialogue. At the time, I knew barely enough Italian to follow the story. My future wife, who spoke Italian fluently, was sitting beside me: she disliked having her concentration broken but provided whispered explanations when asked, filling in the details about the lying, cheating husband, who is insufficiently consumed by guilt for having granted himself romantic privileges on the strength of his creative gift, while his classy wife faces yet another crisis in the endless process of deciding whether to put up with him or walk away. The film should have functioned as a preëmptive counselling session—an advertisement for the advisability of filling out the divorce papers before signing the marriage register. But the aesthetic thrill overwhelmed everything. Long before the lights went up on the stunned audience, everyone in it knew that this was a work to grow old with—one that, as T. S. Eliot once said about Dante's poetry, you could hope to appreciate fully only at the end of your life. You couldn't expect, then, to tease out the meaning of the film's single moments. First, you had to absorb the impact of its initial impression, as authoritative and disabling as that created by the two great wide-screen Botticellis in the Uffizi—only a few hundred yards away from the cinema where "8½" was playing *in prima visione*—which slowed your step and kept you at a distance while you strove to refocus your brain along with your eyes.

In the subsequent three decades, growing older if not wiser, I have seen "8½" every time it was re-released. Now there is a video of it: not a perfect way for a newcomer to see the film but, for anyone who knows it well, a handy aide-mémoire to the order of its events—an order that, though precisely calculated, is inherently bewildering, because the chronology of the immediate narrative sometimes includes scene-long figments of Guido's self-serving imagination and is continually intersected by divergent ripples spun out from his underlying memory. On the whole, "personal" films are to be distrusted, if by personal it is meant that they are personal to their authors. (After the auteur theory took hold, no director could make a film bad enough to be dismissed: a kludge on the scale of John Ford's "Seven Women" was discovered to be personal instead of lousy.) But "8½" is the kind of film that becomes personal to its viewer. Whether "8½" is really about Fellini is a question raised by the film itself—a question answered, in part, by the uncomfortable certitude of any married man who watches it that it is really about *him.* Men, we're all in this together. Fellini had us figured out.

Until almost the eve of the start of production on "8½," the Guido Anselmi character wasn't a film director. We know this because Deena Boyer, a journalist born in America but raised in France, was trusted enough by Fellini to be given unprecedented access to the preparation of this film about the preparation of a film. Even the best movie books are usually more entertaining than indispensable; hers breaks the rule. It was first published in French, as "Les 200 Jours de 8½," but I have never seen it except in German, as a tatty secondhand Rowohlt paperback called "Die 200 Tage von 8½." There is no point in trying to be omniscient about a work of art whose stature depends upon its knowing more about life than you do, but Boyer's supply of firsthand information is handy for dispelling illusions, and the illusion that Fellini set out to make a film about a film director is a crucial one to have dispelled. Woody Allen's "Stardust Memories," in part a copycat of "8½," could hardly work if it were not about an artist in a crisis. But Fellini's ur-hero was *l'homme moyen sensuel* in a crisis. At first, he was "just anyone," or, as Fellini told Boyer, "a man who goes to a watering place and starts thinking about his life."

Guido graduated from being just anyone to being a writer, Boyer records. If "8½" had actually been made on that basis, it would have provided an interesting parallel to Antonioni's masterpiece of two years earlier, "La Notte": same leading man, same professional anguish, same lustrous camerawork by Gianni Di Venanzo. But, as the start of production drew near, Fellini, with Mastroianni already cast, opted for the calling whose nuts and bolts he and his star could most easily show. Thus, very late in the game, "8½" acquired the solid-seeming foreground that snares your initial attention while the psychological background sends out tendrils through its interstices to gather you in. All the fascination, all the *fun*—of the Italian film world, the *mondo del cinema*, is right up front working its charm: the randy production manager getting off with bimbo bit players, the producer carrying on like a prima donna, the prima donna melting down like a maniac, the deals, the double deals, the chaos, the creativity.

ABOVE all, the creativity. It's getting hard for younger generations to grasp, as time goes by, but in the nineteen-fifties and sixties Italy was the true center of the film world. Before the auteur theories promoted by *Cahiers du Cinéma* in France, by the magazine *Movie* in Britain, and by critics such as Andrew Sarris in America forced the movie-mad intelligentsia all over the globe to reassess the Hollywood heritage instead of just enjoying it—a vital preparatory step in the development of the Planet Hollywood we all so uneasily inhabit now—the lesser nations produced the films that seemed to matter most, and of the lesser nations Italy led the pack, ahead of France, Sweden, Poland, India, and Japan. It was as if Italy had risen reinvigorated out of the ashes of the war, a phoenix with a body by Farina and the Klaxon voice of Giuseppe Di Stefano: sexy, strident, attention-getting, bung-full of tradition yet terrifically up-to-date. Italian movies were a worldwide art-house attraction even before "La Dolce Vita" came out, in 1960. After that, they were a sensation. Fellini, with his big hat and loosely slung coat, was in all the photo magazines. Apparently, he lived at a table in the Via Veneto, looking tolerant but reserved while being mobbed by students and paparazzi. (Actually, he never went there or anywhere else in public except to be photographed, and he put up with it only so that his face could pull in money with which to make movies—but we couldn't tell that from looking.) He wasn't alone. Film artists



Whether "8½" is really about Fellini is a question raised by the film itself and answered in part by the uncomfortable certitude of any married man who watches it that it is really about him.

MILO MANARA

FROM THE ARCHIVES: 1974

WOODY ALLEN

BY PENELOPE GILLIATT

DAILY life for this brilliant, courteous man seems to be a matter of endlessly fending off guilt, which settles on the balconies of his intellect like the pigeons on the terraces of his apartment. He has an original and resolute mind that soars off into studious idiocy, but he characteristically seems to look on it as being in need of overhaul—of dry-cleaning, and perhaps starching, with any possibly beneficent chemical additives. "I have a *slight* intellectual component," he said to me gravely, and went on to tell me that he wished he had eyes like Chaplin's ("deep sockets"). He worships Chaplin, and Groucho. Of himself he says, more than half seriously, "I have an intense desire to return to the womb. Anybody's." His life, which looks so gifted and rewarded from the outside, seems to strike him as misbegotten and beset.

He always looks as if he were taking a watch apart when he is thinking about an idea or dismembering the works of a joke, which he does devotedly, as if he had a magnifying glass screwed into his eye. When he is talking about camera movements, he will swivel two fingers of his right hand like a pair of compasses in geometry. And when he is planning a cut in production on the set, he unconsciously moves his fingers apart as if they made a sling with a stone in it that a small boy is about to shoot off. He often seems glum at work, like a lot of comics, but never lost. He is supremely educated in his sense of punctuation and other means of stopping short. It is an instinct that he morosely supposes to be peculiar to him; he is surprised when you laugh at something on the Moviola while he is sitting there looking expressionlessly at what he has done. When he caught me laughing at things on the Moviola, he said, "That's *very positive* of you. People *never* laugh in an editing room." And next he will pick up a ringing telephone—he always answers the thing himself—and cheer someone up or make a date, walking about, because the phone has a long cord. ("Pacing time.") Then he will hang up and come back to the Moviola. "Well, it's a matter of playing the blues and having a go."

At his place one day, he said, "I always see myself as the Jewish uncle at some event. Not the hero, you understand."

"If I hadn't been a writer, I'd be very poor," I said.

"Would you, too? Ah. You *could* have been a meter maid or an actress, but, as I wouldn't want to be an actor in a play, I don't suppose you'd have wanted to be an actress. Writers aren't good actors. Speaking somebody else's words all the time. Embalmed if you're in a long run and out of work if you're in a short run. But rehearsing is terrific. You know something? The nuisance when you're alone is that you start thinking about the poor luck everybody has. Because the worst thing that could happen to anyone is getting older. It's like drawing the ace of spades. And everyone gets it. Though being very young isn't always great, either. It can be like living in a concentration camp. A bum's life or a comedian's life is liberty, on the other hand. Like being just the right age all the time. If I hadn't had this ridiculous capacity for being funny, I'd have been a bum. Or a messenger boy. Coming uptown with an envelope. Your day's your own. That's freedom." ♦

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of impeccable intellectual credentials lived in coronas of personal publicity. Everybody had just worked with everybody else or was about to. The general effect was to make Italy look like an updated opera, with props and costumes shipped in from the future: "Cavalleria Rusticana" with a Ferrari onstage instead of a horse, "Tosca" on a Vespa. The effect, in short, was magnetic.

Australians of my generation on their way to Britain stopped off in Italy to absorb an atmosphere they had correctly divined to be a magic compound of culture and hedonism. Those of us who stuck around long enough to pick up the language found that the film world was even more effervescent than we had guessed. In Florence there was an unending supply of American Fulbright scholars who were supposed to be studying Mannerist painting but still found time to keep up with all the gossip of the Rome-based industry, as if Pasolini were as important as Pontormo, Bolognini as Bronzino. They didn't have to haunt the library to get the facts. It was all in the papers. Producers, directors, cameramen, and actors were getting married, divorced, sued, betrayed, killed, buried, and born again in a pattern constant only in its unrelenting turbulence. Everyone was a star.

Essentially, each Italian film was a collaboration, usually involving three or more writers, two or more of whom would be directors next week and one or more of whom was a producer last week, but the money ran out. All those egos, however, were born to clash: hence the fizz, and hence the air of dedication, detectable in comedies and serious films alike. It is unfair to Antonioni to read his career backward from the disaster of "Zabriskie Point," through the awful, willful obfuscations of "Blow-Up," to the brain-curdling deterministic lethargy of "Red Desert" and "The Eclipse" and to decide that the spaced-out pacing of his high-impact central movies "La Notte" and "L'Avventura" was a bogus claim to seriousness. You didn't have to be mad about Monica Vitti (and we all were, even the women) to decide that those films were definitive treatises on the loss of love, all the more convincing for moving no faster than a snail's funeral. They retain their integrity when seen now, if we can suppress our awareness of how the director himself fell to pieces. Seen at the time, they looked monumental, but they didn't stand alone: bustling at their feet was a metropolis of the imagination.

On the subject of the mature Italian male's sexual dilemma, the comedies of Pietro Germi looked at least as thoughtful as any dirge by Antonioni, and packed in a lot more incident. (In Germi's "L'Immorale," Ugo Tognazzi runs around frantically to keep three fully fleshed female characters happily out of touch with one another until he finally conks out—not from guilt but from an overtaxed heart.) Watching the comedies of Germi, Salce, Comencini, Monicelli, and a half-dozen others as they appeared, we got an education in just how comprehensive and satisfying a popular art form could be without ceasing to be either popular or artistic. The entire national life was up there on the screen, with an interval for drinks.

Over and above the comedies, there was the straight stuff. Postwar neo-realism had evolved into something even better: realism, with a fact-based imaginative scope that could take in anything, even the deep-seated, dangerously retaliatory corruption of the country that had given rise to it. In 1963, Francesco Rosi's "Le Mani Sulla Città" ("Hands Over the City") helped to light a fuse under the Italian political system, which finally burned its way to the dynamite only in the last couple of years. In 1966, Gillo Pontecorvo made "The Battle of Algiers." A radical film of such power that it remains compulsory viewing even for conservatives, it put the dazzling first features of Bertolucci and Bellocchio into sober perspective, making them look childishly hipped on their own anger. In short, the Italian cinema of those years was a lush field for someone to stand out from. Fellini did, head and shoulders.

EVEN more than "La Dolce Vita," "8½" is a clear demonstration of how Fellini became Italy's national director and its ambassador to the world—the ambassador who never left home. The totality of his films is more than the sum of its parts, but all his films are contained, at some degree of compression, in "8½": they all lead up to it or lead on from it. Rich even by his standards, his supreme masterpiece first conveys its wealth through its sumptuous visual texture. Since "Nights of Cabiria," for which the designer Piero Gherardi joined his entourage, Fellini had already put more of his country's visual excitement into his movies than any other director except perhaps Kurosawa. In "8½," with Di Venanzo lighting Gherardi's sets, Fellini excelled even his own previous efforts at pulling his tumultuous homeland into shape.

The lustre isn't just the look of Italy; it's the look of Fellini. Compared with him, the world's other great national directors hardly cared about what the camera could do. Buñuel never moved the camera unless he had to. Renoir called for a bravura setup only if there was no other way to make a narrative point: that much-studied, Ophuls-like long exterior tracking shot in "Le Crime de Monsieur Lange" is there just so you can see exactly how far the hero has to run along corridors and down flights of stairs. And you can't imagine Bergman actually enjoying what in his case you feel inclined to call the physical side of it. But Fellini, even in his maturity, is like Orson Welles playing with the toy train set for the first time. In "8½," the camera sails and swoops weightlessly yet without a flutter, as if following grooves in space. As Boyer's book reveals, there was no question of Fellini's standing aside and letting Di Venanzo make all this happen. Fellini was with him behind the camera: the instructions given to the operator, Pasquale de Santis, were their joint work, with Fellini always in the ascendant, specifying every aspect of a black-and-white mise en scène gorgeous enough to make color look famished. Fellini was so sure of getting what he wanted that it didn't bother him if he was unable to check his work. He almost never looked at rushes, although for much of the shooting of "8½" he couldn't have even if he had wanted to: the laboratories were on strike.

Not only were there hardly any dailies, there were practically no scripts. Only two complete copies of the script existed anywhere near the production. Fellini had the picture in his head. To a large extent, it happened the way you feel it happened: like a marvellous, fluent improvisation, with a freedom of expression which extended to the actors—even to those who were amateurs and needed dozens of takes to get a tricky scene right. According to Fellini's usual practice, the players, whether professional or amateur, were cast for their faces. For Fellini, *la faccia* was everything. In a little book of 1980, "Fare un Film," Fellini said that he would have preferred not to decide on his cast until he had seen every face in the world. Fellini had always taken delight in casting untrained faces and getting precise performances out of them, but until "La Dolce Vita" he mainly confined them to the lower ranks of the cast. In "8½" they are up among the leading figures. The role of Guido's increasingly apoplectic producer (clearly modelled on Fellini's real-life bagman, Angelo Rizzoli) is played by an industrialist, Guido Alberti. Physically ideal in his pampered rotundity, he uncorks a performance that a trained actor would be proud of. (Alberti went semi-pro afterward: he'd got the bug.) Similarly, the screenwriter is played by a real screenwriter, Jean Rougeul. Possessing a face that begs to be slapped, he, too, is physically ideal, but it is remarkable how good he is at the lines, or how good Fellini makes him. Contrary to legend, in Italy it does matter if an actor can't say the lines properly: though Italian films are post-synched, the lips have to match the words in anything except a long shot. Rougeul, a Frenchman, had to work hard. He does an amazing job of being repellent. When he gets strung up, the audience laughs.

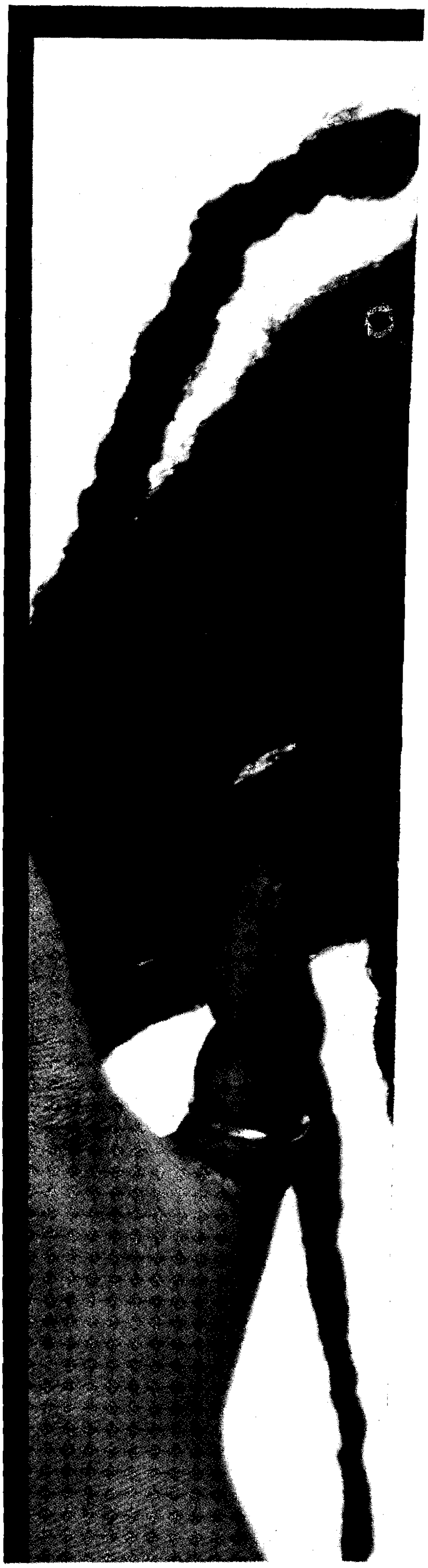
In a TV interview given by the late Alexander Mackendrick to Stephen Frears, Mackendrick said he had always found mixing untrained actors with trained ones doubly fruitful, because the untrained caught discipline and the trained caught naturalness. This effect can be seen working at a high pitch in "8½." The principal players have no star mannerisms: they are just people. Mastroianni and Anouk Aimée, playing Guido's wife, Luisa, aren't on-screen together for much more than fifteen minutes, but the way they connect across distance burns at the center of the film: these are the embers of a long love, too spent to keep either party warm yet still too hot to handle. As Guido's mistress, Sandra Milo pulls off the impossible trick of being a nitwit angel that a smart man would like to know almost as much as he would like to lay. (To fatten her up for the role, Fellini made her eat until she groaned.) In "Fare un Film" he calls the Milo character a *culona*, which means, more or less, that her brain is in her behind. Purely physical, ecstatically devoted to her lover, she is not to be blamed that he is bored with her a few minutes after she steps off the train. It isn't her fault: it's his. All this fuss is about something deeper than adultery. "8½" isn't about the melodrama in the life of its protagonist; it's about the psychodrama in his mind.

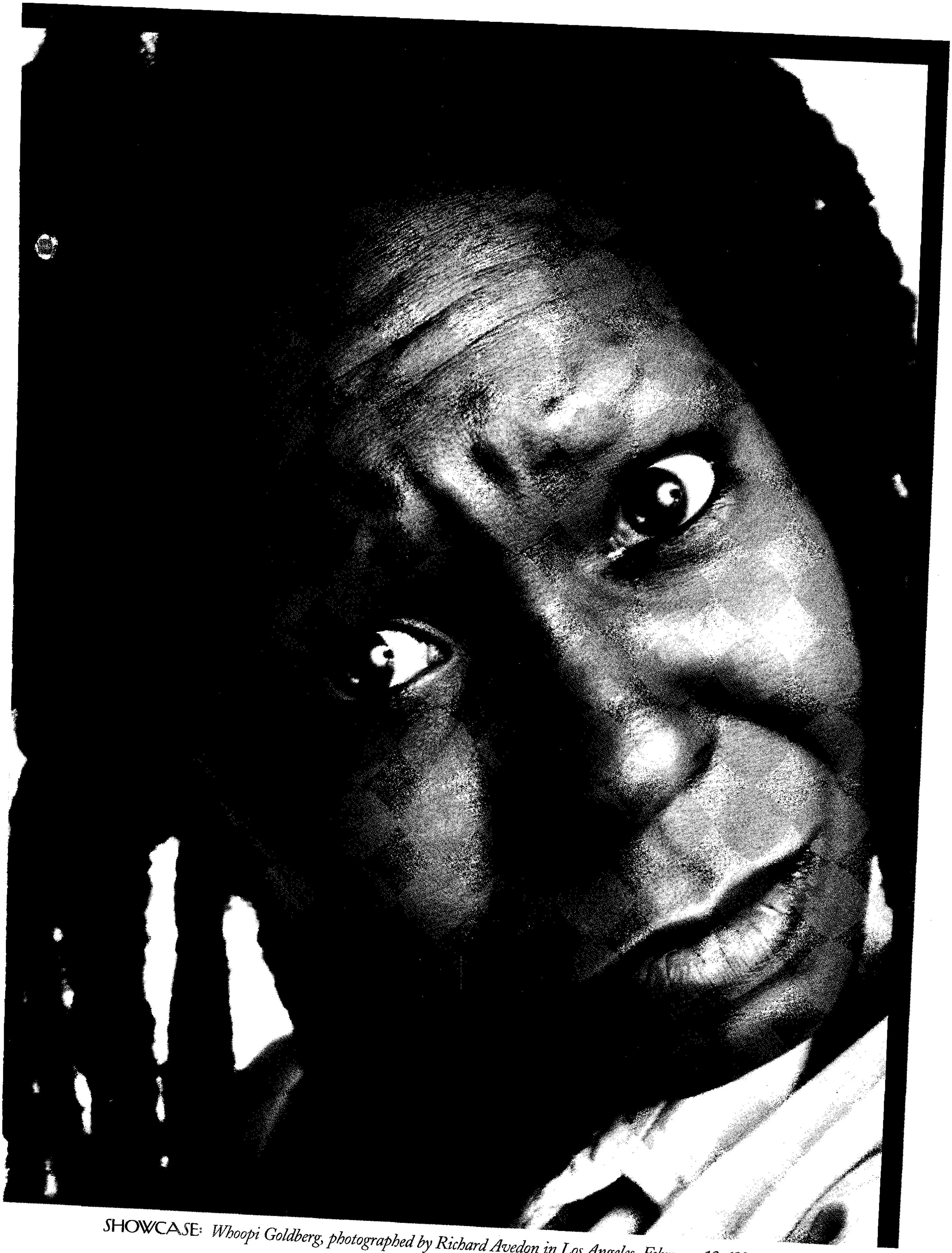
"DIDN'T you know that Saraghina is the devil?" The question that rings through "8½" rang through Fellini's life. Fellini commonly told interviewers anything that would get rid of them, but on the subject of Saraghina—the enormous, blowsy, barefoot madwoman who lives on the beach and dances lasciviously for the young Guido and his fellow Catholic-school inmates—he told them the truth, or at least he told them all the same lie. He said that while he was at a church school in Fano (he spent several years there, away from his native town of Rimini) he visited Saraghina often, and that the price for getting her to perform was low. (She was cheap: her name means "sardines," and she would accept a few of these as payment for her revelatory routine.) But the price for getting caught watching her was high. The priests made him kneel on dried peas while they put him to the question. Refusing to believe that Saraghina was the Devil was obviously the essential decision of Fellini's early emotional life. He preferred to believe that she was an angel.

Whether or not the Saraghina episode ever happened to the young Fellini, Guido's memory of Saraghina is the unfrocked and irrepressible guarantee that his imagination can't be a thing of refinement: the most he can hope for is to make refined things from it. His imagination itself must remain primitive, shaped incorrigibly by the initial impact of her uncorseted oomph. Guido still half regrets that he could never give the priests a satisfactory answer. Fellini himself seems to have been glad enough, if not exactly grateful, to have a story in his mind that would help him to script and shoot the male sexual imagination as a divine comedy.

THE mind is the house of the Lord, and in the house of the Lord there are many mansions, and one of them is a honky-tonk. Fellini's central boldness is to embrace that fact and body it forth without shame—just with the embarrassment involved in being consciously human. In one of the most elaborate sequences in "8½," Guido is propelled back in memory to the *fattoria*—a barn fitted out for winemaking where, as a child, he was teased, tucked up, and spoiled by his mother and grandmother. He stages a wish-fulfillment scene in which all the women in his life live together in harmony, united by their common desire for him. They compete in nothing except subservience. Even his wife is there, smiling in acquiescence, but as the scene develops Guido is recast as a monster, ruthlessly consigning the women he no longer wants to banishment "upstairs." When his dream women rebel, he has to get his whip out and drive them like animals: a clear confession on Guido's part that his sexual imagination is an incurably adolescent fantasy of banal variety and impotent control.

Just as clearly, it is Fellini's confession, too. This has to be the real reason why he made Guido a film director: to show the director cracking his whip over his tumultuous desires, to show him marshalling his fantasies. Fellini's wife, the distinguished actress Giulietta Masina, was on the set to witness the filming of this key scene; it was her dubious privilege to watch her husband's surrogate bring the members of his harem back into line with that whip. Masina was no doubt fully aware of Fellini's belief that a man can't help what goes on in his mind, and so had better be judged on his conduct. What she thought of that belief is one of the many secrets of their long marriage. What Fellini thought of his wife is stated explicitly in "Fare un Film," where he ascribes their marriage to a decision of fate, but you have only to look at his films from "La Strada" onward, even when she is not in





SHOWCASE: *Whoopi Goldberg, photographed by Richard Avedon in Los Angeles, February 13, 1994.*

THE ASIAN INVASION

Taiwan: "The Wedding Banquet."

Vietnam: "The Scent of Green Papaya."

China: "Farewell My Concubine."

LORENZO MATTOTTI

them, to see what she meant to him.

Fellini was a feminist *avant la lettre:* in the early sixties, Italy was still in the grip of a chest-beating male supremacy that stretched back to the Borgias, among whom Lucrezia probably took up poisoning just to get some attention at the dinner table. Anyone interpreting Italy then from the vantage point of now might look at Fellini's wide screens full of big breasts and accommodating thighs and decide that Fellini was part of the problem. The truth is that he was part of the solution. He was saying that men should be held responsible for what they did, not for how they felt. It was an especially important message for a country in which what men did could beggar belief.

Feminism was one of Fellini's touchstones of liberty. The anger he aroused in feminists later on was caused by his other touchstones, one of them being the liberty to express the full squalor of the male mind. He did it with such bravura that it struck the censorious eye as a boast. It wasn't, though: it was an abasement, and Anouk Aimée's tight-lipped fury as Luisa is there to prove it. Luisa is what the German socialists used to call a *Lebensgefährtin,* a lifetime companion. Strong in her anguish, graceful even in despair, she is the true Felliniesque womanly icon. Anouk looked the part. Masina's misfortune was that she didn't. When it came to the crunch, she didn't have the right face to play herself. She could be funny, resilient, and even tough, but, with a face like a doll, she just couldn't transmit that flintlike fury. In "La Strada" and "Nights of Cabiria," she played the waif. It was in "Juliet of the Spirits"—the all-color extravaganza that is nowadays the most neglected of Fellini's major films—that Masina had her chance to play the wife. With the proviso that her face is borrowed from a Cinderella who will never get to try on the shoe, the film is an opulent tribute to her stature in Fellini's life. This was the last picture Fellini made with Gherardi and Di Venanzo, and they both outdid themselves. The sets are operatic, and the photography makes color film look as if it were being invented all over again. Giulietta's imagination and memory are explored like Guido's in "8½": there are layers of Jungian analysis, parapsychology, voodoo, and hallucinations that seem almost drug-induced. Fellini subsequently told *Cahiers du Cinéma* that he didn't need LSD to have visions, but he was clearly willing to try anything in order to give his votive offering to his wife the depth and splendor he felt she deserved. The idea was to show her liberating herself from her psychological burden. But it was his idea, not hers. In "Fare un Film," Fellini movingly looked forward to the day when women would give us their view of the world in film. That day hadn't yet come, and in the meantime he was stuck with his own stuff.

He still had plenty more, but first he had a crisis to get through. "Juliet of the Spirits" tanked in a big way, he broke with Gherardi, lost Di Venanzo, swapped Rizzoli for Dino de Laurentiis, sailed straight into a real-life "8½" situation with a film he couldn't start, and wound up suffering from what seemed like terminal depression. Most directors would have quit at that point and gone off to give lectures, but Fellini was on the verge of a string of films that are, at the very least, all interesting sidelights on "8½,"and some of which, in one aspect or another, actually supersede it. Peter Bogdanovich once pointed out that Fellini's first few movies, the ones we rarely see, would have been enough to establish him as an important director. It should also be said, but rarely is, that the films after "Juliet of the Spirits" would have been sufficient to work the same trick. A few weeks ago, on a plane between London and Bangkok, I watched videos of "Fellini Satyricon" and "Fellini's Roma." I still didn't enjoy "Satyricon" very much: except for the scene where the patrician married couple commit suicide to get away from the moral squalor—a clear echo of Steiner's unexpected yet inevitable exit from "La Dolce Vita"—it just doesn't offer enough relief from its own all-consuming animality. The people in it behave like pigs, but not even pigs behave like pigs all the time; sometimes they just lie there. (Fellini was too decent to be any good at decadence, and even if he had been, decadence dates: this is the reason some parts of "La Dolce Vita" now look passé.) "Roma," however, came up fresh as paint. The traffic-jam scene is a far more effective comment on modern barbarism and insanity than anything in "Satyricon," which was supposed to reflect our own age but made it look good by comparison. In "Roma," the threat of industrial society's inhumanity is made real by the intensity of the humanity. The *trattoria* on the street, with the tram clanging past, looks like the way of life we all want but suspect that only the Italians have ever had. It was probably never quite that folksy in Rome: Fellini is remembering Rimini.

When I got back to London, "Amarcord," the film that actually does remember Rimini, was showing on television as part of a memorial season. I had always recalled it as a delight, but now it looks like a masterpiece. It hasn't changed; perhaps I have. "Amarcord" (in the dialect of Rimini, the word means "I remember") is like all the childhood flashbacks in "8½" condensed into one. Saraghina is there again: a nameless tobacco vender this time, but with breasts bigger than ever. Our young hero, appropriately called Titta, gets his head caught between them, and this counts as a big adventure. Everything here is small-time: the cinema, the bar, the square. The cars of the Mille Miglia automobile race howl through town, but they are going somewhere else. The big, lit-up liner sails away. The citizens remain, eating, drinking, having families, and occasionally dressing up as Fascists. It takes a while for the viewer to realize that this is a film about Fascism, and longer still to realize that this is *the* film about Fascism. Especially in the late sixties, Fellini was accused of having said nothing about politics. He defended himself by saying that he saw politics purely in terms of personal liberty, and in "Fare un Film" he explains that the life led in "Amarcord" was the soil from which Fascism grew and can always grow: a life of arrested adolescence, narrow horizons, mean dreams, easy solutions and—saturating everything—ignorance. The film bears out his analysis in every respect. He shows the disease with a clarity that defines the cure: Fascism is undisciplined nostalgia, a giving in to childish wishes, the cuddle continued, the tantrum in perpetuity.

"Fellini's Casanova" is the film he should never have made. Artistically, it has some interest; strategically, it was a disaster. Some critics decided, on the strength of its weakness, that he had been an erotomaniac all along. But "Casanova" is a dud precisely because Fellini was no pornographer. If he had been, his films would be running continuously on Eighth Avenue and making a lot of money. Casanova the seducer is the wrong hero for a man who wanted to submit to his women, not dominate them; Fellini craved their individuality, not their similarity. Fellini had nothing but contempt for Casanova and wanted to prove it—a bad plan for an artist whose forte was his range of sympathy. The film was such an unequivocal stiff that you wept for Donald Sutherland, who must have felt honored to be in it and devastated when it didn't work out. (Sutherland had previously starred in Larry Tucker and Paul Mazursky's "Alex in Wonderland," a now forgotten but considerable homage to "8½," in which a young American director has trouble starting a movie.)

Casanova is in Fellini's next big film and last masterpiece, "La Città delle Donne" ("The City of Women," 1980)—only this time he is called Dottore Santo Katzone. (Since *cazzo* is the Italian word for 'cock' and *-one* is the enlarging suffix, the name means that he has a big one.) Katzone, like Casanova, is really just another version of Don Juan, and must suffer the same fate: to find his own endlessly repeated excitement an endless disappointment, to suffer the built-in letdown of the permanent hard-on. Katzone, though not on-screen long, is probably the best stab at Don Juan's pitiable doom since Mozart's. Bergman, in "The Devil's Eye," gave his Don Juan too much finesse: his punishment is to have the woman disappear at the moment he embraces her, whereat he gently recoils with a polite sigh. Katzone gets what he wants, and it eats him up. He can feel himself coarsening even as he thickens, turning into one of the phallic sculptures that decorate his room, a petrified forest of dildos in which he is the only flexible component, and only just. Snaporaz, the film's hero, has no desire to be Katzone. Played by none other than Marcello Mastroianni in full panic mode, Snaporaz (the name seems to be one of Fellini's many code names for a liar) is, like Guido in "8½," a married man battling his sexual imagination, but this time it's in color, and the women of his desires come on in choruses, in kick lines, in cabarets with Las Vegas lighting effects: they slide down poles and go up in balloons. At the beginning, he gets off a train, and he spends the rest of the film trying to get back on. (It sounds like the same train scene that was cut from the end of "8½" when Fellini realized that the circus finale was the only possible wrap-up.) He is trying to hide out in his own fantasies, but the militant feminists are in there, too, and they want to cut off his water, at the very minimum.

Mastroianni's brilliantly conveyed helplessness didn't save the film's reputation. An unflinching portrayal of a man at bay was widely condemned as a conscienceless parade of unreconstructed male chauvinism. By this time, Fellini was routinely being called sentimental, even by critics who conceded the historical importance of his central films. Sentimentality was supposed to be his weakness. His case wasn't helped by "E la Nave Va" ("And the Ship Sails On," 1983). The ship-of-fools format is always a loser unless the ship makes landfall: there is no tangible social life for comparison, so the artificial one on the ship has to refer to itself, with cramped results. But faces, as always with Fellini, stick in the memory: Pina Bausch playing a blind woman, staring straight out of the screen with eyes like those of the dead sunfish on the beach at the end of "La Dolce Vita," when Mastroianni sees the girl who incarnates his lost innocence. . . . Even at the end of Fellini's career, there was something in each new movie to remind you of all the others—something to remind you that there was a man behind the film, and that he had a woman beside him to whom he felt bound to explain himself. The explanation was always about the difficulty of marriage and the emptiness of the alternatives. It was always about Fellini and Masina. "Ginger and Fred" was charming, but unworthy of them: the story of a couple of old hoofers who couldn't really dance that well, it gave Masina and Mastroianni all too many opportunities to be cute. But Fellini and Masina *could* dance that well: they were people of majesty, not puppets of fate. Pathos was inappropriate.

I CALLED some friends in the Czech Republic recently, who said they were looking forward to seeing "8½" the next evening on a satellite movie channel. Fellini distrusted television. In the later part of his life, when big movies were harder to finance, he made films for television, but he always disliked the restrictions: the TV screen didn't have enough information in it; the shot could never go deep; the lighting had to be too even. Above all, he disliked the atomization of the audience—one, two, or, at most, a few people in front of the set, eating, drinking, and talking. He thought that the movie house as he had known it for most of his life was the last church. He valued its sacred aspect. Well, TV screens will get bigger, and the resolution will get better. It doesn't take a clairvoyant to envisage the day when all you can see in the cinema you will be able to see at home, without some lout behind you laughing through his popcorn at all the wrong moments. Every movie of any consequence that has ever been made will be there in front of you at the touch of a button. But *l'aspetto sacrale* probably won't be coming back. On the information highway, each of us is going to be alone in the middle of a hundred lanes of traffic. It will be a lot like trying to walk out of Los Angeles on the freeway system.

In any case, most of the entertainment that people all over the world touch their telephones to get will be manufactured somewhere in the San Fernando Valley. And I suppose a more horrible fate for the world can be imagined: American films at their most mindless have seldom been as toxic as any totalitarian country's films at their most sophisticated. On the whole, back in the sixties, we were right to restate our enjoyment of the old Hollywood as admiration, to turn fandom into scholarship.

But this development had one lasting deleterious consequence. The attention that had been focussed on the great national directors of other countries began to lapse. Renoir, Bergman, Ray, Wajda, Kurosawa, Ozu, Fellini: we had been preoccupied with them for a long time; we had grown bored with endorsing their obvious eminence; and, anyway, they could look after themselves. So we sort of let them go. Yet they had something that their successors didn't always have—we could see that Truffaut might be another Renoir, but Godard obviously wasn't anything of the kind—

SHOWCASE

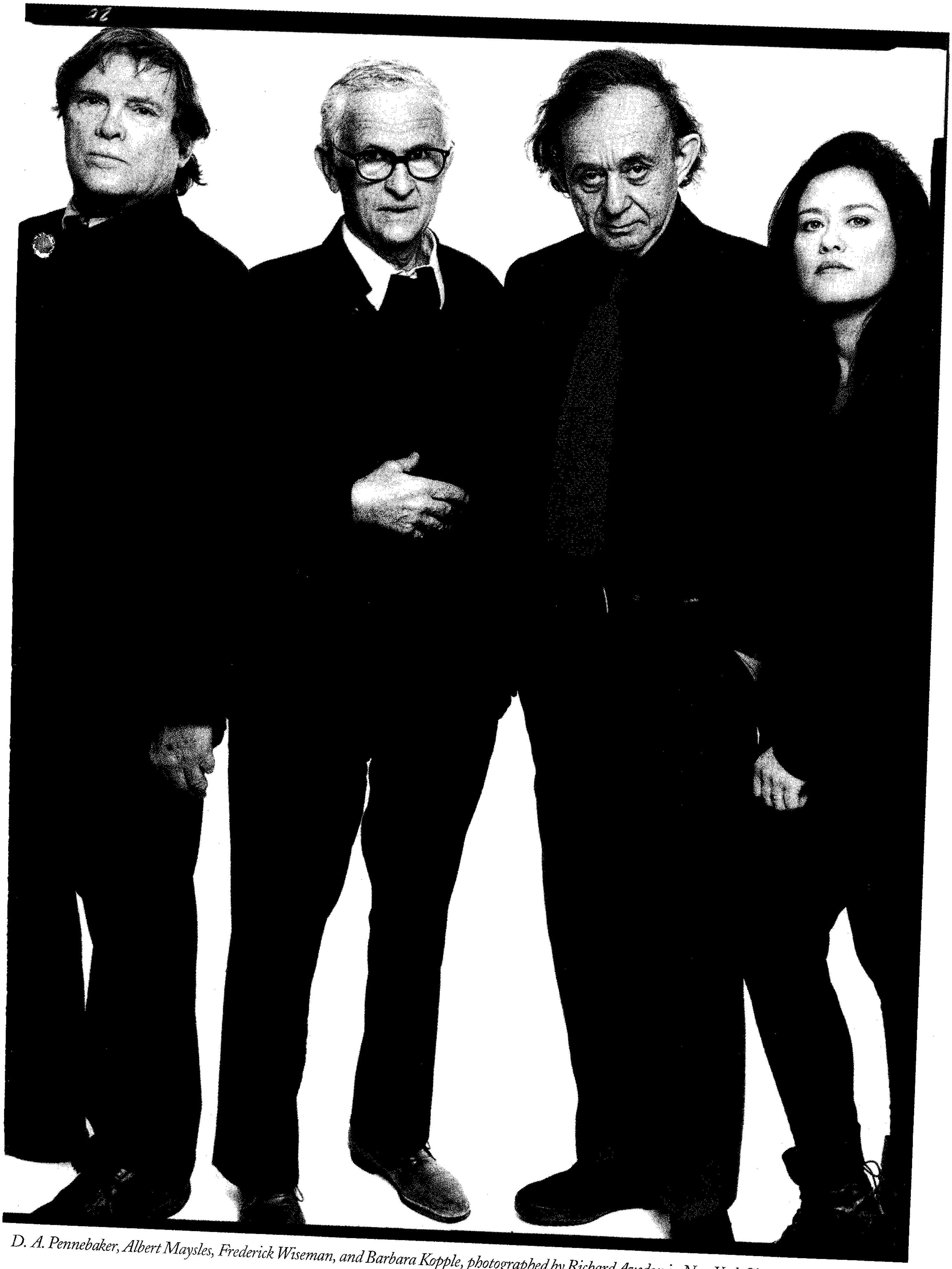
THE DOCUMENTARIANS

WE crowd the bright dream pavilions of theatrical film, while off to the side, in a smaller, monochrome tent, documentary filmmakers show us their dark, strange attractions. Without scripts, without actors, without a supporting army of technicians and assistants, the documentarians set out to capture the drama of actuality, to discover an unforeseen story in hundreds of hours of mundane footage. Working with low budgets and banking on long shots, they bring us visions more unsettling than anything we can imagine.

The four directors shown here are leaders of the revolution in documentary films that began in the late fifties, when the development of handheld cameras and portable sound equipment freed movie crews to follow action on the spur of the moment. D. A. Pennebaker and Albert Maysles mastered this new medium just as the sixties came crashing in, and gave us films that define that decade. Pennebaker's "Don't Look Back" is an astonishing portrait of Bob Dylan in 1965; his "Monterey Pop" (1968) shows the sixties party in full swing. Maysles, with his brother David (who died in 1987), assembled a brilliant first feature, "Salesman" (1968), and recorded the murderous dénouement of the decade in the Altamont documentary "Gimme Shelter" (1970). Most recently, Maysles has done the story of Christo's "Umbrellas," and Pennebaker co-directed "The War Room," a documentary about the Clinton Presidential campaign, which has been nominated for an Oscar this year.

Frederick Wiseman, starting in 1967, with "Titicut Follies," a heartrending portrayal of life in an insane asylum, has made twenty-five documentaries, which constitute, in effect, a vast nonfiction novel about our social institutions. PBS will broadcast his new film, "High School II," in September. Barbara Kopple won Academy Awards for two courageous features about labor disputes—"Harlan County, U.S.A." (1976) and "American Dream" (1990)—and last year she directed perhaps the most remarkable network-television documentary ever made: "Fallen Champ: The Untold Story of Mike Tyson."

—HAL ESPEN



D. A. Pennebaker, Albert Maysles, Frederick Wiseman, and Barbara Kopple, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, January 27, 1994.

AN EARTHBOUND BOY

(AFTER SEEING THE MOVIE "TEST PILOT")

Whenas in films my Myrna goes,
My secret passion leaps and glows;
But oh, I know it is in vain:
I cannot fly the simplest plane.

Nor could I ever grace a fable
Like Myrna's sky prince, Mr. Gable;
For I am just an earthbound boy,
Unfit to touch the hem of Loy.

When Metro-Goldwyn love is born
Mine own lies drooping, all forlorn.
When crippled plane descends the sky
And HE steps out—it is not I.

Ah, Myrna, sweet as honeysuckle,
I'm blessed with neither swash nor buckle,
For I am just a prosy sort,
Like Thorgersen and the world of sport.

In dream I bank around a pylon,
Knowing it's Clark that she will smile on,
Knowing his tears were only glycerine
In all those scenes he had to kiss her in.

Marvellous Myrna, lovely Loy,
Take pity on this earthbound boy,
Whose fragile nerves can ne'er survive
The fierce descent of power dive,

Whose heart could be a whole lot calmer
And still unfit to test a bomber.
Blessings on thee, Myrna Loy,
I'll always be your earthbound boy.

—E. B. WHITE

(*The New Yorker, May 21, 1938*)

and that the American directors didn't have at all. To begin with, the earlier masters were mainly true filmmakers, not just directors who were nothing without the right producer to bring them the right script. They developed a project from the beginning and got the whole of their country's life into it, and they went on doing this until they were old and gray. In America, Orson Welles might have done that if his personality had been different. Peter Bogdanovich might have done it if his life had been different. But it has always been hard to avoid the conclusion that what really needed to be different was America itself.

Not that Hollywood lacked a sense of history. Contrary to what foreign intellectuals usually thought and had such fun expressing, Hollywood always expended huge energy on getting the historical details right, down to the buttons on the costumes. Where history went missing was in the people. Even today, when some of the cleverest people in the world are writing and directing Hollywood films, the characters on the screen are usually present only in the present. They haven't got a past, except as a series of plot points. They might say wise things, but not from experience. They are happily married until they love someone else, and then they leave the person they were with and go off to be happy with the other, as if love were some kind of moral imperative. And if one of the miracles of modern Hollywood is the energy that is lavished on these sleepwalking ciphers, another is how the people doing the creating often end up behaving like their creations.

Too many of the people busy with their careers in Planet Hollywood are just boys and girls, whereas a man like Federico Fellini was a man. Called "sentimental" by those for whom his emotions were too big and too pure, he was really the enemy of sentimentality, which he had correctly diagnosed as being only a step away from cynicism. The typical aria of sentimentality is from an operetta: it breathes the perfumed atmosphere of *Leichtsinn*, that dreadful Viennese word which makes the heart heavy the moment it is sung. In "8½," Mastroianni at first glance looks like a refugee from an updated production of "Die Fledermaus." But there is no *Leichtsinn* here, no glibly wry tolerance of other people's suffering, no easily borne betrayals. Instead, there is melancholy. It comes from the self-examination without which life is not worth living. Fellini's is the tragic view of life, the gift of the old countries to the new ones where people think their life is over if they are not happy. It is the view of life formed in that aspect of the mind which, even when all the religions are dead, dying, or preaching holy war, we still feel bound to call the soul.

Fellini was by no means a perfect man. He was not an ideal man. He was a real one. His individuality resided in his being able to see what was universal about himself; he had a scope, within and without, that made him in postwar Italy what Verdi had been for the Risorgimento: the great cultural figure of Italy's recuperation, and, beyond his own country, one of the great men of the modern world.

Fellini was even beyond the cinema as a specific art. Though he was the master of all its techniques, he pursued it not as one art form among others but as if it were art itself. The last scene of "Les Enfants du Paradis" is magnificent, but it is just cinema. Its director, Marcel Carné, would have been lost without Jacques Prévert's screenplay, and Baptiste and Garance were only symbolically separated by the crowd flowing past the Théâtre des Funambules—they could have met again around the corner. The last scene of "8½" is often compared with Carné's flag-waving finale, but the difference is the difference between substance and style, between a revelation and mere flair. Fellini's outburst of exuberance has a grief in it that leaves the children of paradise looking like the children they are—patronized by their parents, the makers of the film. When Guido joins the circle with his wife and all the people he lives and works with, the spectacle is no pretty ring out of an Arcadia by Poussin. It is an acknowledgment of a truth that the most prodigious artists realize with their souls, even if they sometimes deny it with their mouths: that, despite their uniqueness, they are not alone, that they live and work for the people, of whom each of them is only one.

The evidence suggests that Fellini, for all his mighty ego, was a man with no vanity (except about his thinning hair), and that he experienced his talent as a responsibility to be lived up to as long as his life lasted, even when his best collaborators were gone, the money had run out, the young directors who had hoped to emulate him had given up or gone abroad, and Italy's *mondo del cinema*, stripped of its atmosphere by the voracious gravity of Hollywood, was reduced to a lifeless satellite. As long as the art prince Fellini was alive, the Italian film industry had a face.

But, though *la faccia* is gone, *l'anima* yet lives. Fellini's films are already popping up everywhere, even out of the armrests of airline seats, and at least one of them will be watched in awe when human beings live in spaceships and have at last grasped that the longest voyage is inside the mind. "8½" will transmit the distillation of a national culture to an international, homogenized future that might well be condemned to have no other source of such qualities except the past. It is the work of a man who could realize his gift because he realized what a gift is. A gift comes from Heaven, as an elation of the spirit. For its recipient not to enjoy it would be ungracious, despite the grief it might bring—which is why Fellini told Marcello, before he began his long, weary walk down the corridor, to flick that foot. ♦

COLLABORATIONS

TED TALLY ON JONATHAN DEMME

WORKING with the director Jonathan Demme on "The Silence of the Lambs" was a continuing partnership that went far beyond the usual screenwriter-director relationship, which often ends with a whole series of discarded writers relegated to the sidelines as the "real work" of making a movie gets under way.

Thomas Harris's novel offered us a bold and original departure from typical thrillers, and Jonathan was determined to avoid the movie clichés of the genre. He was alert to the humanity of every scene, however brief, and to the particular self-interest of every character, however minor. "Remember," he said at one point, "that as far as Dr. Chilton is concerned, this entire story is about the embattled director of a mental hospital." In other words, we must never simply push characters and events around like pieces on a chessboard, as so many thrillers do, merely for plot convenience, or the movie would seem mechanical and contrived; it would have no sense of lived life.

As we worked, I tended to be the "logic maven," worried about losing the audience as they tried to follow our story's complex investigation. But Jonathan was more sanguine. After I pointed out one particular area of potential confusion, Jonathan laughed and said, "That's a refrigerator question." A refrigerator question? "You know. You've just come home from a movie, you had a great time, you go to the refrigerator to get a beer, you open the door, and you say '*Wait* a minute. . . .' " Jonathan doesn't worry too much about refrigerator questions.

Again and again, both during our script work and later, during editing, he emphasized the supreme value of narrative momentum. "Better," he said, "to risk confusing the audience for three minutes than to let them get ahead of us for one second." A small sequence, late in the movie, reveals a great deal about his technique.

At the climax of Hannibal Lecter's escape, there is a moment when the SWAT-team cops open the roof hatch on an elevator, expecting to finally capture him. A body tumbles down, its back to us, and a cop steps forward, as scripted, stares for a moment at the corpse, then says, "That's Pembry!" Then we cut to a shot of a racing ambulance, and we go inside it, where an E.M.S. worker is speaking over his radio, and we see the disguised Dr. Lecter sit up behind him. The E.M.S. worker turns and sees him as Lecter smiles, slowly raising his knife. That's how the little sequence is scripted, and that's how Jonathan faithfully shot it.

But later, working with his editor, Craig McKay, Jonathan saw that by making tiny snips at the end of each scene—leaving off the identification of the dangling body, and then Lecter's raising of the knife—he could jump away an instant *before* the audience had quite grasped what was happening, leaving them with the same disconcerting lurch one feels when a roller-coaster starts its descent. He could extend the characters' sense of dislocation to the audience itself. And, more important, he could entice a greater emotional and imaginative engagement, since the audience is forced to scramble, filling in the missing beats. The audience, instead of being a passive bystander, becomes a creative partner in the moviegoing experience.

If you multiply such painstaking care by an entire movie, and by an entire career, you will see why Jonathan's work is so effective and so likely to endure. ♦

STAR TURNS

GOTTA DANCE!

Gene Kelly, who is now eighty-one, became all things to the movie musical in its last great era, but he's best remembered as the guy who danced alone.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

He had plenty of ginger but no Ginger: although he danced affectingly with Leslie Caron, amusingly with Debbie Reynolds, snappily with Judy Garland, bouncily with Rita Hayworth, broodily with Vera-Ellen, and respectfully with statuesque, stony-faced Cyd Charisse, we think of Gene Kelly as a guy in loafers and a tight T-shirt tap-dancing up a storm all by his lonesome. His torso and his profile were beautiful, and he had a touching little scar on the left side of his mouth, and the musical comedies in which he starred never failed to deliver his dream girl into his embrace; yet somehow his image left no space around it into which a moviegoing housewife could project herself. Even boneless, balding, big-eared Bing Crosby was more of a heartthrob. In the masculine romp of "On the Town"—for this viewer the very best of all Kelly's musicals—Frank Sinatra is cast as a sex-shy nerd, yet in this secondary and comic role he manifests that mysterious tug, that shadowy depth of contradictory possibilities, which Kelly rarely offers amid the outpouring of his glittering, genial gifts.

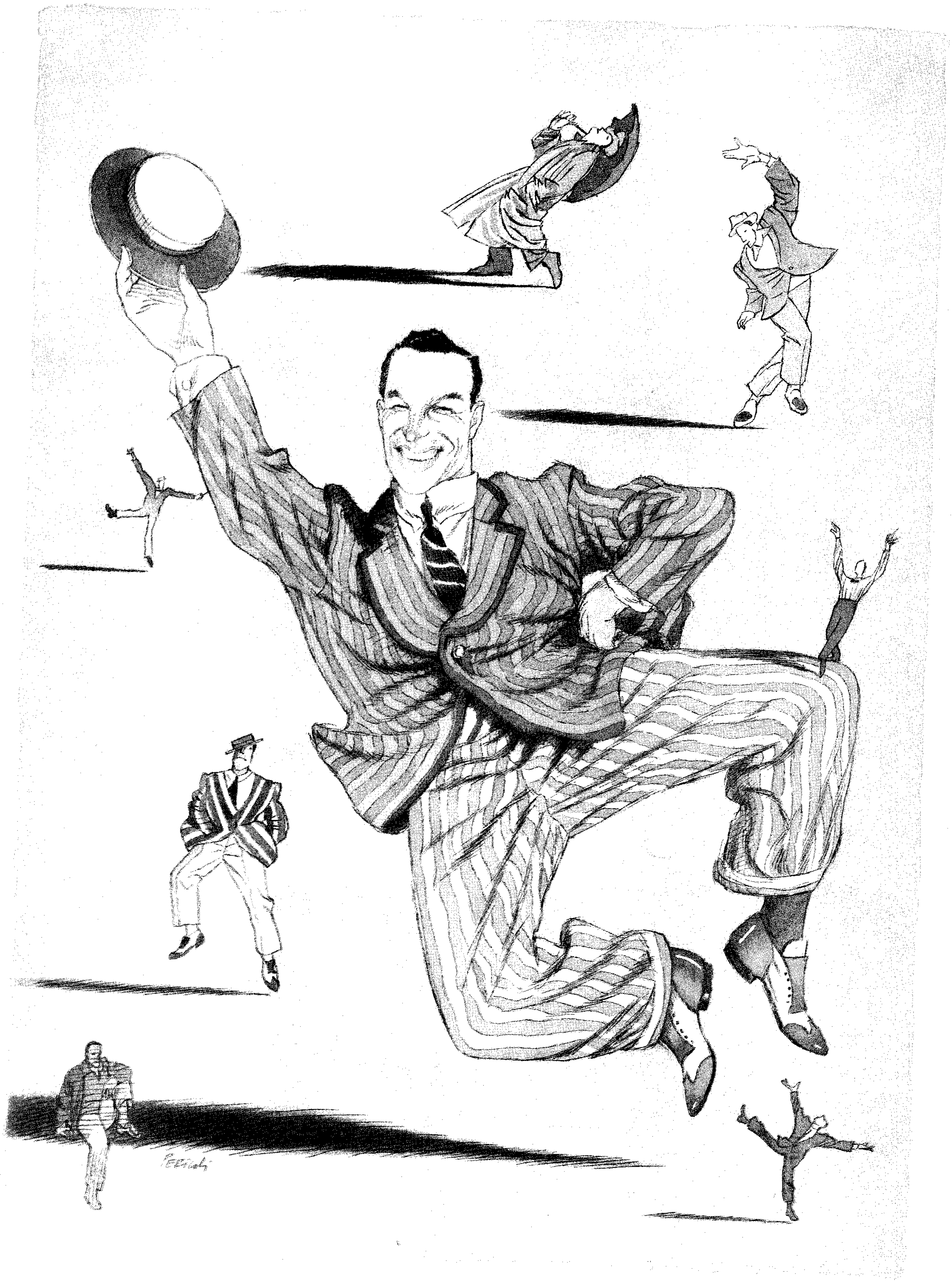
In contrast—in the inevitable contrast—millions of moviegoing housewives imagined themselves dancing with Fred Astaire. The two dancers, though similar in the intelligence and ardor of their dedication to their art, were differently conditioned. Astaire began his career on the vaudeville stage as his sister Adele's dance partner, and it is as a consummate ballroom dancer, weightlessly swirling his partner through a polished and heavenly space, that he lives in our pantheon. Kelly, thirteen years younger, came too late for the ballroom tradition. As related in "The Films of Gene Kelly," by Tony Thomas, Kelly's first stage partner was his brother Fred, and he trained his body on high-school athletics in his native Pittsburgh; in the 1958 television documentary "Dancing—A Man's Game," Kelly said, "I played ice hockey as a boy and some of my steps come right out of that game—wide open and close to the ground." His Canadian-born father flooded their back yard and gave him hockey lessons; his mother loved the theatre and saw to it that he and his two brothers attended dancing school. At fifteen, Eugene Curran Kelly was working out with a semi-pro ice-hockey team; while attending Penn State, he was a gymnastics instructor for the Y.M.C.A. After college, he founded a dancing school with his mother, and then went to Chicago to take ballet lessons from Berenice Holmes. He came to New York in 1937, at the age of twenty-four, and got his first break as the dancing character in William Saroyan's "The Time of Your Life," in 1939; his big break came as the star of "Pal Joey" (1940), a musical based upon his fellow-Irishman John O'Hara's epistolary sketches of a night-club singer, heel, and loner.

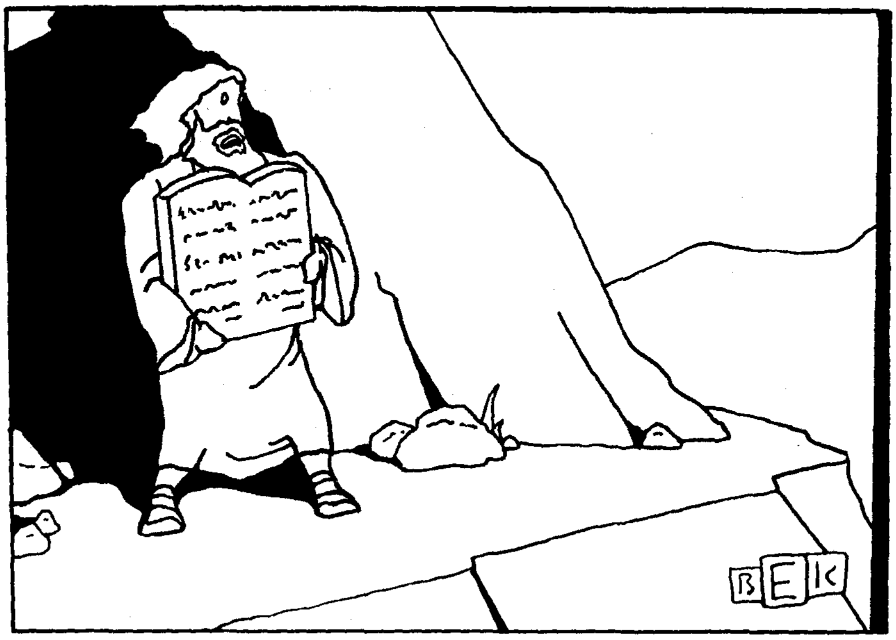
Hollywood welcomed him in 1942. His dancing was more athletic and balletic than Astaire's—one cannot imagine Astaire doing the dizzying number on a high building framework that Kelly performs in "Living in a Big Way" (1947), the aerial acrobatics of "The Pirate" (1948), the swooping roller-skate tap dance of "It's Always Fair Weather" (1955), or the crablike sidewise scuffle on hands and feet that Kelly agilely lowers himself to in several films—and his screen persona was less partnerable. Some of his most memorable numbers, such as the duet with his own reflection in "Cover Girl" (1944), come in the lonely trough between love at first sight and eventual reunion with the heroine. In another technical tour de force, "Anchors Aweigh" (1945) had him dancing with animated cartoons, as did the "Sinbad the Sailor" episode of "Invitation to the Dance" (1956). In the latter sequence, as in many live numbers throughout his films, Kelly—the third of five children, and the middle son—is in the middle of three dancing men. Male partners seem to free him up to be his most cheerfully spectacular and inventive self, among them a creditably dancing Sinatra in their two sailor musicals; Donald O'Connor in "Singin' in the Rain" (1952), beginning with the marvellous throwaway vaudeville bits in the opening flashback; Michael Kidd and Dan Dailey in the celebrated trash-can-lid dance from "It's Always Fair Weather"; and Astaire himself in the introductory segments of "That's Entertainment Part II" (1976). Astaire was seventy-seven years old, yet noticeably the looser of the two—especially in his arm movements—as he and Kelly perform some charmingly low-key dance patter.

Of course, Kelly can glide through the steps with a woman, and can execute a tap routine in perfect synchronization beside her, but up close he lacks a certain ineffable touch. In his first Hollywood film, "For Me and My Gal" (1942), there is an incidental moment in which George Murphy, in the role of the ousted suitor, does a brief turn with Judy Garland that is revelatory in its courtly ease of motion; we see, through a chink of the main romantic plot, just how a woman should be danced with—with a feathery lightness and a feather-stiff spine.

Yet it is in "For Me and My Gal" that we are most fully persuaded that the Kelly character is loved by the heroine. Garland, only twenty in 1942 but a vaudeville trouper since the age of four and for six years a Hollywood presence, had wanted Kelly for the part, instead of Murphy, who had originally been cast as the guy who gets the gal. She tutored Kelly in acting for the camera. "It was Judy who

TULLIO PERICOLI





"First, I'd like to thank the Academy."

pulled me through," Kelly later said. "She was very kind and helpful, and more helpful than she even realized because I watched her to find out what I had to do." An intensity of attention does burn through when they gaze each into the other's shining black eyes or crisply tapdance side by side. Kelly, fresh from his brash Broadway role, is still swaggering, and his reedy intonation suggests a gentler younger brother of James Cagney's sassy, defiant George M. Cohan. Kelly and Garland both have a slightly troubled, orphaned air, which lends believability when the film—with the hero's decision to beat the First World War draft by mangling his own hand on a trunk lid—takes a film-noirish turn, and which sees them through the musical's timely metamorphosis into a rousing war movie, complete with dead Germans and smoky battlefields. It is Garland's nervous energy, clarion voice, and still girlish looks that carry the picture; confronted with so volatile and compelling an expressiveness, Kelly's relatively immobile face yields traces of a sulky city waif, with something of Bogart's or John Garfield's bruised appeal. He was subsequently cast, in the freewheeling manner of studio-run Hollywood, in a number of non-singing roles—in one film, "Christmas Holiday" (1944), as the would-be killer of Deanna Durbin. He dies in her arms, begging forgiveness.

The chemistry between him and Garland had faded when they were paired again, in 1948, in "The Pirate." This fanciful action farce, situated on a level of unreality that might be called arty, is Kelly's movie, though the rights to the stage play had been purchased by M-G-M's Arthur Freed as a vehicle for Garland, to be directed by her then husband, Vincente Minnelli. Garland has aged beyond her years, and the zany plot has her and Kelly mostly at odds; at one point, she unloads nearly all the breakable furniture of a colonial palace in his direction, in one of filmdom's great exhibitions of throwing by a left-handed female. Kelly's personality is so encased in his flamboyant parody of John Barrymore and Douglas Fairbanks as to be impenetrable, and the concluding number, "Be a Clown," appears to have jumped in from some other musical. Garland sings her best number supposedly in a hypnotic trance, and her whole performance seems a bit dazed—gamely she makes her moves and hits her marks without really getting what is going on. Kelly's most with-it partners are a pair of black dancers, the Nicholas Brothers, whom he insisted on including in spite of warnings that even such mild miscegenation would cost the film some Southern bookings.

Their third pairing, in "Summer Stock" (1950), revives the chemistry, but with the current reversed. Kelly, as a dance-happy city slicker, is in top form; Garland, who would not work for M-G-M again, looks overweight and considerably older than Kelly. Her addictions and inner travail were on their way to cutting short her precocious career; it is his physical electricity, along with the droll byplay of Gloria De Haven and Eddie Bracken, that lifts this lame bucolic romance halfway off the ground.

NO one in the postwar era worked harder to expand the movie musical's boundaries than Kelly. Making his début as a co-director with "On the Town" (1950), he persuaded the management of M-G-M, which in those days hated to leave its Culver City soundstages, to let him shoot on location in New York; in three hurried days, he and a crew captured all the various shots of New York scenery that, sprinkled among the soundstage footage, give the film an unprecedented spaciousness. Brought in on a forty-six-day schedule, on a budget of merely a million and a half dollars, and bearing little relation to the stage musical of the same name, "On the Town" has remained a proud favorite of Kelly's; he has said, "After 'On the Town,' musicals opened up." Viewing it on video, I found myself continually smiling; there is almost nothing stale about it, and nothing painful, such as the overblown ballet in "An American in Paris" (1951) or the grating voice that Jean Hagen was obliged to put on in "Singin' in the Rain." The opening shots of the surreal Manhattan skyline at dawn, the unprefaced arrival of song in the voice of the sleepy dockworker, and the perennial theatricality of sailor suits instantly transport the action to a realm of buoyant make-believe where singing and dancing are the norm. Besides the Statue of Liberty and Rockefeller Center, "On the Town" has the terrific tapping of Ann Miller and some postmodern dialogue: Betty Garrett, as the amorous taxi-driver Brunhilde Esterhazy, says to Sinatra, "I like your face. It's open, you know what I mean? Nothing in it. The kind of a face I could fall into. Kiss me." Alice Pearce, in the now unthinkable role of a laughably ugly girl, says after a brief date with Kelly, "At last I have something to write in my diary. I've been using it for laundry lists." Not quite Congreve or Shaw, but flip, sharp, and sweet. "On the Town" is that happy occasion, an ambitious film not spoiled by any sign of ambitiousness. A year later, Kelly, as star and choreographer, presented an overtly ambitious display of what dance meant to him and could mean to the movies—"An American in Paris." His love of France gives warmth to a number of episodes, and rather paternally enfolds the gamine heroine he chose for his leading lady, the eighteen-year-old ballet dancer Leslie Caron. But Oscar Levant is a dour presence, there isn't enough for the French performer Georges Guétary to do, and Kelly's artist hero's murkily dubious affair with Nina Foch's rich patroness strikes an off-note that doesn't go away. The climactic ballet, to the music of Gershwin's "American in Paris," now appears, with its French-painter sets and eclectic busyness, pretty heavy kitsch, while the dancing episodes of the corny thirties farces of Rogers and Astaire feel ever more precious and pure.

THAT ineluctable invidious comparison dogs Kelly's renown. In the years when Hollywood musicals were a popular genre being churned out in abundance, Kelly's ebullient performing prowess and venturesome spirit put him at the head of the pack; now he tends to be remembered as the Astaire-not, a chesty hoofer with a slant smile who danced the Hollywood musical into its coffin. Astaire's thirties movies played to a giant captive audience, an America stuck in the Depression, with little else but the radio to amuse it. Kelly's postwar movies were competing with a rising television that was keeping more and more of the adult middle class at home. The furious energy of "Singin' in the Rain" has something desperate about it; it is, like Cinerama and the fifties Biblical epics, trying to outshout and outdazzle the little home screen. O'Connor's frantic gymnastics to "Make 'Em Laugh" and Kelly's delirious splashing in the famous title number have an attention-getting excessiveness; the most relaxed and old-fashioned number—the peppy furniture-hopping of O'Connor, Kelly, and Debbie Reynolds to "Good Mornin' "—is the most pleasing. (One wonders how much American furniture was broken by adolescents trying to emulate the smoothly controlled sofa-topple that the three dancers ride toward the camera.) Even the film's nostalgic topic, the critical moment when sound came to the motion pictures, has a pleading undercurrent—*Love us*, the movies are saying, *like you used to*. But no brilliance of performance, no breadth of screen, no new suavity of color (the early-fifties movies all look blue, with everybody wearing powder-blue suits and even blue fedoras) could bring the crowds back. John Springer, in his 1966 history of the Hollywood musicals, "All Talking! All Singing! All Dancing!," names "Singin' in the Rain" "the best movie musical ever made" and yet writes:

> By the mid-Fifties, the "Golden Era" of movie musicals indeed seemed over. Many of the brightest originals . . . were making disappointing showings at the box office. As the world market became an ever more important factor in final box office grosses, it became evident that in many foreign countries musicals were not being shown at all. Or occasionally they would be shown with song numbers neatly snipped out.

There was something artificial about the movie musical which audiences came to resist—even to the point of wanting the songs snipped out! It has almost always been a tense and potentially awkward moment when the background music swells and the hero or heroine takes a breath to project a melody into his or her significant other's face. But we put up with it for decades, pleasurably, as a rendering, on film, of stage magic. Song and dance go back to the very beginnings of theatrical performance. The Greek tragedies were partly chanted; Shakespeare thinks nothing of interjecting a song. By assembling in a theatre, we license the performers to do whatever they can to entertain us: sing, dance, juggle, cavort. The live presence of performers makes theatre a social event, in which the gala dress of the audience echoes the costumes onstage. But the cinema, once past the primitive phase when a stationary camera filmed a stage action, complete with proscenium arch and footlights, became more interior—a kind of seen novel, consumed in a private darkness and ever more skillfully imitating, with its camerawork, the shifts of consciousness. As the movie audiences forgot the live performances of vaudeville, travelling opera companies, and small-town theatricals, and the upright piano lost its pride of place in the American home, the conventions of musical comedy seemed ever more incongruous. These conventions were always somewhat incongruous; the majority of musicals concerned show business, whose professionals would naturally demonstrate singing and dancing skills and might plausibly use them to enact their private lives. But actors and actresses make up a tiny fraction of humanity, and backstage is a narrow world. It wore thin. Real people don't sing and dance, and it is a rare musical—"On the Town," "Oklahoma!" "West Side Story"—that convinces us they do.

Also, noting the particular foreign resistance to Hollywood musicals, one might speculate that there was something specifically American about these films—a brassy optimism and a galvanizing work ethic. From the muscularity of the performers to the dizzily wheeling multitudes of choral dancers and swimmers, the atmosphere is cheerfully industrial. The style of the images may be insouciant—Look, Ma, I'm tap-dancing!—but their message is power, American power, the power released from Everyman by the emancipations of democracy. In this factory of American self-celebration, Kelly, who rose from the assembly line to the managerial level of choreographer and director, was ideally electric yet chaste. The musicals were about sex, but sex puritanically streamlined. They demonstrated to their public how to make love in the old sense of the phrase, as when William Dean Howells writes, in "Venetian Life," of an "idle maiden" who "balanced herself half over the balcony-rail in perusal of the people under her, and I suspect made love at that distance, and in that constrained position, to some one in the crowd." Making love is finding the way to the fadeout kiss, not what comes after it. To the question "How can I get a guy/girl?" the Hollywood musicals answered, "Dance with/sing to him/her." Again and again, after their spoken spats, they musically melt, Rogers and Astaire, Howard Keel and Kathryn Grayson, Kelly and whoever, into each other's arms. Around 1955, they begin to melt away. The profitable movie musicals to follow will tend to feature Elvis Presley. The tune changed—rock and roll (its very name gutsy and lewd) made the elaborate sublimations of the musical comedy seem arcane, if not silly. Another language had become academic. Few spoke the language when it was a live one with more fluency than Gene Kelly, and none more thrillingly embodied American élan. ♦

PORTFOLIO

CONTRACT PLAYERS

BY RICHARD AVEDON

FROM "MARQUIS WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA 1993-1994":

REAGAN, RONALD WILSON, former President of United States; b. Tampico, Ill., Feb. 6, 1911; s. John Edward and Nelle (Wilson) R.; m. Jane Wyman, Jan. 24, 1940 (div. 1948); children: Maureen E., Michael E.; m. Nancy Davis, Mar. 4, 1952; children: Patricia, Ronald. BA, Eureka Coll., 1932. Gov. State of Calif., 1967-75; businessman, rancher, commentator on public policy, 1975-80, Pres. of U.S., 1981-1989. Sports announcer, motion picture and TV actor, 1932-66. Author: Where's The Rest of Me?, 1965; Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches, 1989; An American Life: The Autobiography, 1990. Served as capt. USAAF, 1942-45. Mem. Screen Actors Guild (pres. 1947-52, 59-60), Tau Kappa Epsilon. Republican.

REAGAN, NANCY DAVIS (ANNE FRANCES ROBBINS), volunteer, wife of former President of U.S.; b. N.Y.C., July 6, 1921; d. Kenneth and Edith (Luckett) Robbins; step dau. Loyal Davis; m. Ronald Reagan, Mar. 4, 1952; children: Patricia Ann, Ronald Prescott; stepchildren: Maureen, Michael. BA, Smith Coll.; LLD (hon.), Pepperdine U., 1983; LHD (hon.), Georgetown U., 1987. Contract actress, MGM, 1949-56; films include The Next Voice You Hear, 1950, Donovan's Brain, 1953, Hellcats of the Navy, 1957; Author: (with Bill Libby) Nancy, 1980; formerly author syndicated column on prisoner-of-war and missing-in-action soldiers and their families; author: (with Jane Wilkie) To Love a Child, (with William Novak) My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan, 1989. Civic worker, visited wounded Viet Nam vets., sr. citizens, hosps. and schs. for physically and emotionally handicapped children, active in furthering foster grandparents for handicapped children program; hon. nat. chmn. Aid to Adoption of Spl. Kids, 1977; spl. interest in fighting alcohol and drug abuse among youth: hosted first ladies from around the world for 2d Internat. Drug Conf., 1985; hon. chmn. Just Say No Found., Nat. Fedn. of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, Nat. Child Watch Campaign, President's Com. on the Arts and the Humanities, Wolf Trap Found. bd. of trustees, Nat. Trust for Historic Preservation, Cystic Fibrosis Found., Nat. Republican Women's Club; hon. pres. Girl Scouts of Am. Named one of Ten Most Admired Am. Women, Good Housekeeping mag., ranking #1 in poll, 1984, 85, 86; Woman of Yr. Los Angeles Times, 1977; permanent mem. Hall of Fame of Ten Best Dressed Women in U.S.; recipient humanitarian awards from Am. Camping Assn., Nat. Council on Alcoholism, United Cerebral Palsy Assn., Internat. Ctr. for Disabled; Boys Town Father Flanagan award; 1986 Kiwanis World Service medal; Variety Clubs Internat. Lifeline award; numerous awards for her role in fight against drug abuse.

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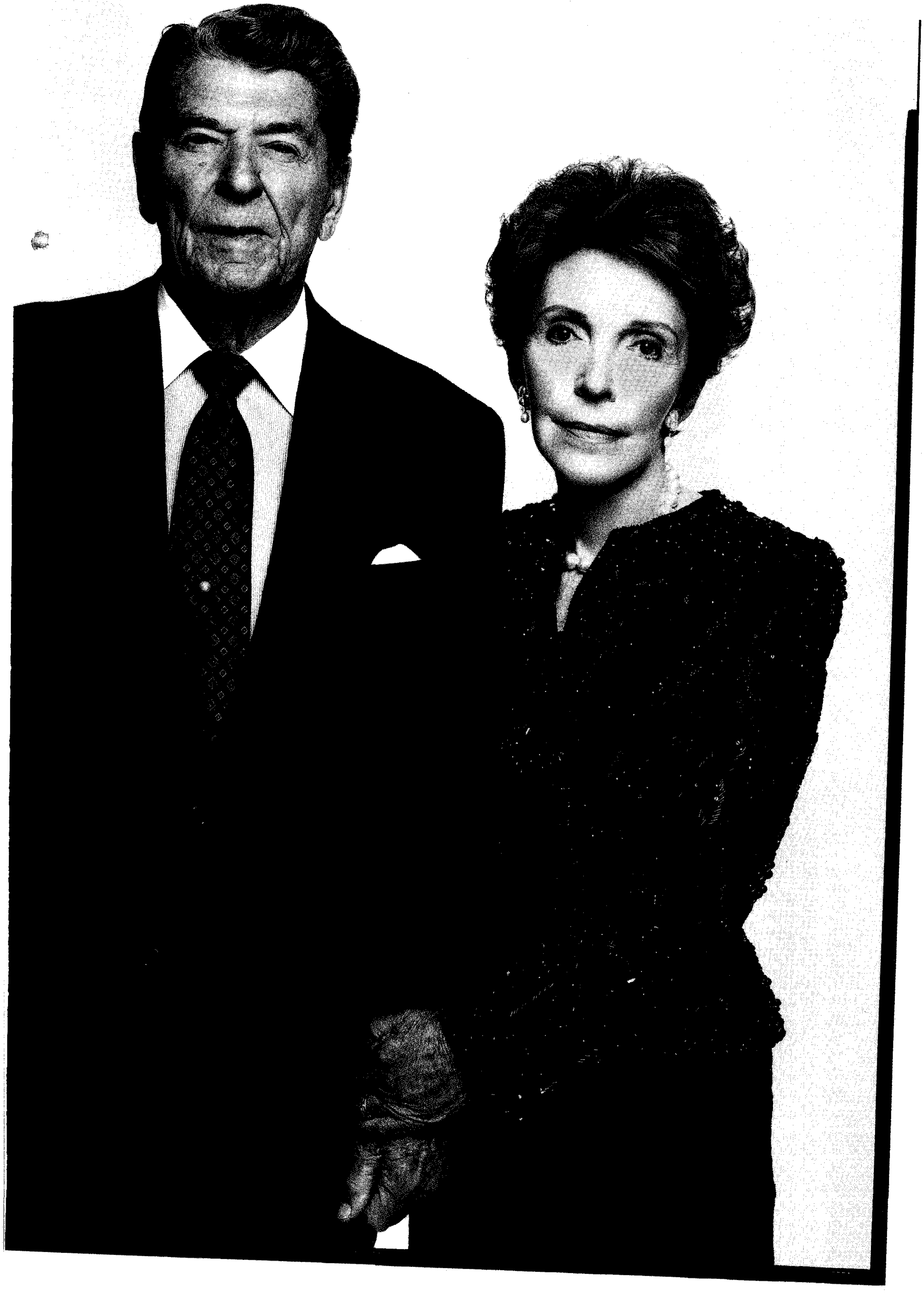
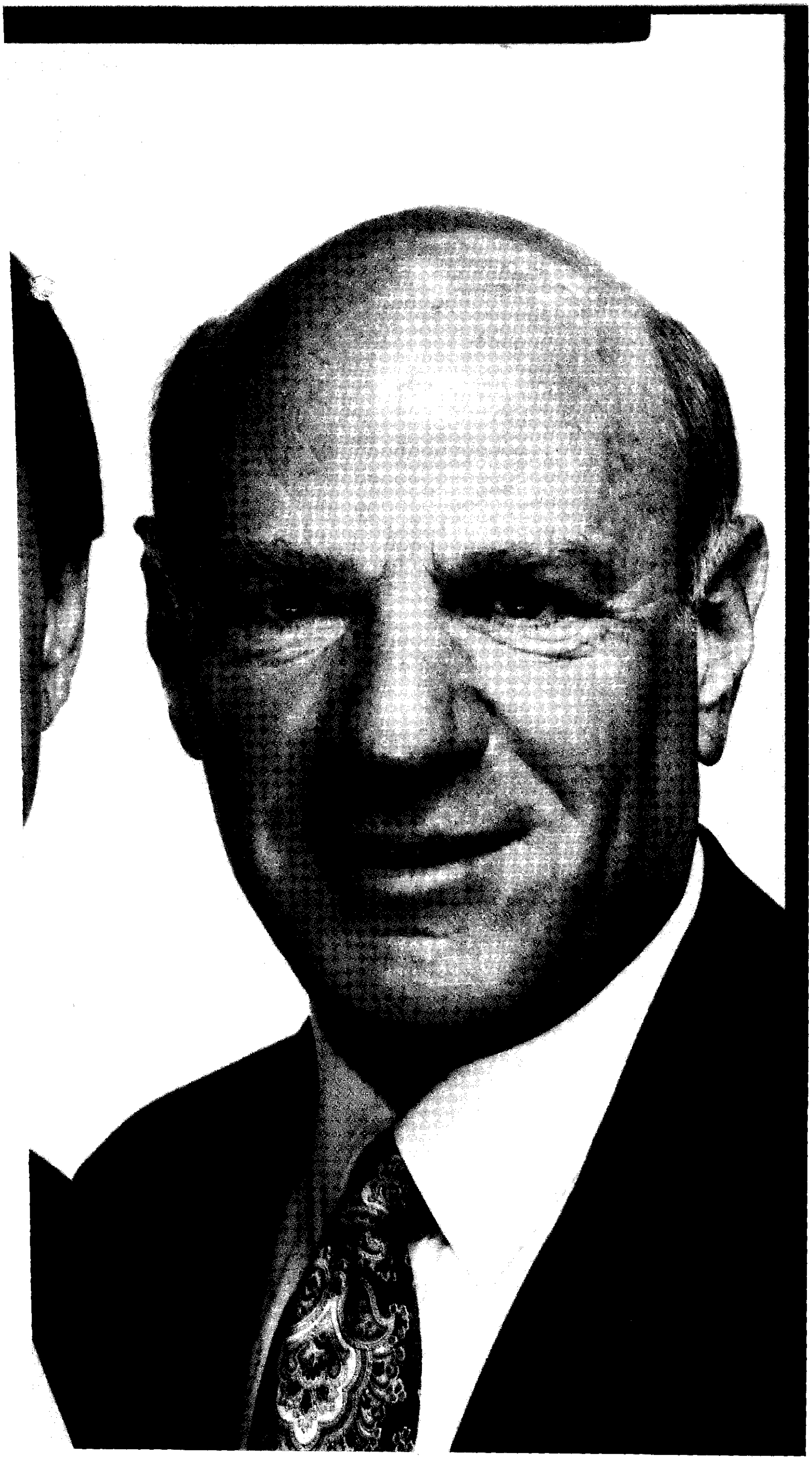
Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Los Angeles, April 1, 1993.





EISNER, MICHAEL DAMMANN, entertainment company executive; b. Mt. Kisco, N.Y., Mar. 7, 1942; s. Lester and Margaret (Dammann) E.; m. Jane Breckenridge; children: Breck, Eric, Anders. BA, Denison U., 1964. Began career in programming dept. CBS; asst. to nat. programming dir. ABC, 1966-68, mgr. spls. and talent, dir. program devel.-East Coast, 1968-71, v.p. daytime programming, 1971-75, v.p. program planning and devel., 1975-76, sr. v.p. prime time prodn. and devel., 1976; pres., chief operating officer Paramount Pictures, 1976-84; chmn., chief exec. officer Walt Disney Co., Burbank, Calif., 1984—. Bd. dirs. Denison U., Calif. Inst. Arts, Am. Film Inst.

OVITZ, MICHAEL S., artists agency executive; b. 1946; m. Judy Reich, 1969; 3 children. Grad. UCLA, 1969. With William Morris Agy., 1969-75; co-founder, pres. Creative Artists Agy., L.A., 1975—. Mem. Zeta Beta Tau.

DILLER, BARRY, entertainment company executive; b. San Francisco, Feb. 2, 1942; s. Michael and Reva (Addison) D. Vice pres. feature films and movies of week ABC, 1971-73, ABC (prime time TV), 1973-74; chmn. bd. Paramount Pictures Corp., 1974-84; pres. Gulf Western Entertainment Group, 1983-84; chmn., chief exec. officer Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., TCF Holdings, L.A., 1984-85, Fox, Inc., 1984-92; chmn., chief exec. officer QVC Network, 1993—; bd. dirs. Mus. TV and Radio, Calif. Inst. Arts, Acad. TV Arts and Scis. Found. Mem. Pres. Export Coun.

Michael Eisner, Michael Ovitz, and Barry Diller, Los Angeles, February 14, 1994.

LAZAR, IRVING PAUL, lawyer, artists' representative; b. Brooklyn, N.Y., Mar. 28, 1907; s. Samuel Mortimer and Stari (DeLongpre) L.; m. Mary Van Nuys, Jan. 1963. Student, Fordham U., 1926; LL.B., Brooklyn Law School, 1931. Bar: N.Y. 1932. Sole practice N.Y.C., until 1935; with Music Corp. Am., 1936-42; artists rep. service for writers/dirs. for legitimate theatre and motion pictures N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, London and Paris, 1933—. Served as capt. USAAF, 1942-45.

POSTSCRIPT

EXIT SWIFTY LAZAR (1907-93)

THE little man whose head was as big as the Ritz loved style more than money. One needed money to have style, he would remind you—but money by itself never purchased it.

I imagine his notion of heaven would include a never-ending party at Los Angeles's celestial hangout, Spago, with St. Peter at the gate as Security to bar those boring and virtuous enough to ascend to the outer reaches of Paradise but not witty, elegant, or accomplished enough to make the Spago list. Noël Coward, Cole Porter, and Moss Hart would surely be there but would probably arrive late. Some otherwise qualified people, whose earthly misdeeds had assigned them to a warmer climate, would be missed.

Quite suddenly I think of Irving in one of his many heavens-on-earth. The Richard Zanucks and my wife and I had taken him and his wife, Mary, one sunny day to lunch at Chez Frederic, on the island of Saint-Honorat, a speedboat ride away from his posh digs at the Hôtel du Cap, near Cannes. While Lazar was dismembering the langouste, washing it down with a superb Provence white, the Domaine Ott Blanc de Blanc, he appropriately invoked a lyric of his client Alan Jay Lerner—"What do the simple folk do?"

Except for Billy Wilder, Lazar was the last player of Hollywood's golden age, when the music was by Gershwin, Porter, and Berlin; stars were not afraid to come out at night (and how they glowed!); and studio heads were marvellous primitives—colorful, semiliterate, and unabashed snobs.

Through the glorious haze of a drinking and smoking age, Lazar, as agent, championed only those writers, composers, and actors he found acceptable as dinner and travel companions. "I would have made more money with Harold Robbins," he once remarked. There was nothing fuzzy about his convictions, social or fiscal. While I was an executive at Twentieth Century Fox, Darryl F. Zanuck telephoned me with a bizarre request. "Lazar claims I bought the rights to 'Can-Can' at Romanoff's last night for seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars," he said. "I don't remember any of it." (They drank, remember?) "Ask Mike"—the princely proprietor of Romanoff's—"if he remembers." Mike did. Lazar was right. Both men kept their word.

Irving (his friends never called him Swifty) said only recently that he owed his success to his having been among the first, in the years following the Second World War, to introduce studio heads to the star players of the Algonquin set, Broadway, and the West End. He provided what the moguls of that earlier time craved: legitimacy and social approval.

Lately, he had enjoyed a curious celebrity: book deals, not movies, had become his mainstay. Until his illness, he spent as much time in New York and Europe as in Los Angeles. He had two sets of friends, clothes, and life styles—New York's and L.A.'s. And yet Irving Paul Lazar was distinctly and loudly Hollywood. There were more movie stars and power players at his annual Spago party than at the Academy Awards. Most of those who cultivated him and angled for invitations were not clients and, in fact, had no business relationship with him at all. Why did they revere him, and the biggest of them heel to his command? Perhaps this diminutive bull of a man symbolized an independence and a self-made elegance that even the richest and most powerful of them lacked.

Notwithstanding his pedigree, Lazar was a man of the moment, bored with discussions of past exploits and the old Hollywood. He was terrified of death. He felt that as long as he could keep the action going he would never have to leave the party.—DAVID BROWN

Irving (Swifty) Lazar, April 1, 1993.

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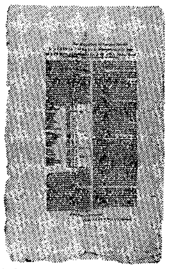

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RERELEASE

INTRODUCING THE BLACKLIST

In a 1948 piece, Lillian Ross, the author of "Picture," described how Hollywood handled the blacklist as only Hollywood could.

BY LILLIAN ROSS

HOLLYWOOD is baffled by the question of what the Committee on un-American Activities wants from it. People here are wondering, with some dismay and anxiety, what kind of strange, brooding alienism the Committee is trying to eliminate from their midst and, in fact, whether it was ever here. They are waiting hopefully for Chairman J. Parnell Thomas, or Congress, or God, to tell them. They have been waiting in vain ever since last November, when eight writers, a producer, and a director—often collectively referred to these days as "the ten writers"—were blacklisted by the studios because they had been charged with contempt of Congress for refusing to tell the Thomas Committee what political party, if any, they belong to. In the meantime, business, bad as it is, goes on. The place is more nervous than usual, but it is doing the same old simple things in the same old simple ways. The simplicities of life in Hollywood are not, of course, like those anywhere else. This is still a special area where all the lakes in the countryside are labelled either "For Sale" or "Not for Sale," and where guests at parties are chosen from lists based on their weekly income brackets—low ($200-$500), middle ($500-$1,250), and upper ($1,250-$20,000). During the last few months, party guests have tended to be politically self-conscious, whatever their brackets, but this is not especially embarrassing in Hollywood, where it is possible to take an impregnable position on both sides of any controversy.

The political self-consciousness at parties is, on the whole, rather cheerful. "I never cut anybody before this," one actress remarked happily to me. "Now I don't go anywhere without cutting at least half a dozen former friends." At some parties, the bracketed guests break up into sub-groups, each eying the others with rather friendly suspicion and discussing who was or was not a guest at the White House when Roosevelt was President—one of the few criteria people in the film industry have set up for judging whether a person is or is not a Communist—and how to avoid *becoming* a Communist. Some of the stars were investigated several years ago, when the un-American Activities Committee was headed by Martin Dies, and the advice and point of view of these veterans are greatly sought after. One actor who is especially in demand at social gatherings is Fredric March, who suddenly discovered, when called to account by Mr. Dies, that he was a Communist because he had given an ambulance to Loyalist Spain. Dies rebuked him, and it then turned out that Mr. March had also given an ambulance to Finland when she was at war with Russia. "I was just a big ambulance-giver," Mr. March said to his sub-group at a recent party, loudly enough for other sub-groups to hear. "That's what I told Dies. 'I just like to give ambulances,' I told him, and he said, 'Well, then, Mr. March, before you give any more ambulances away, you go out and consult your local Chamber of Commerce or the American Legion, and they'll tell you whether it's all right.' "

Some groups play it safe at parties by refusing to engage in any conversation at all. They just sit on the floor and listen to anyone who goes by with a late rumor. There are all sorts of rumors in Hollywood right now. One late rumor is that the newest black-market commodity in town is the labor of the ten writers, who are reported to be secretly turning out scripts for all the major studios. Another is that one producer is founding a film company and will have all ten of the blacklisted men on his staff. Rumors that the F.B.I. is going to take over casting operations at the studios are discounted by those who have lived in Hollywood for more than fifteen years. The casting director at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, a fidgety, cynical, sharply dressed, red-cheeked man named Billy Grady, Sr., who has worked in Hollywood for nearly twenty years, thinks that it would serve J. Edgar Hoover right if the casting of actors were handed over to the F.B.I. "Hoover thinks *he's* got worries!" Grady shouted at me in a Hollywood restaurant. "What does a G-man do? A G-man sends guys to Alcatraz! Ha! I'd like to see a G-man find a script about Abraham Lincoln's doctor in which we could work in a part for Lassie. What do you find inside of Alcatraz? Picture stars? Directors? Cameramen? No! The goddam place is full of doctors, lawyers, and politicians. This is the fourth biggest industry in the country, and only three men in this industry ever went to jail. There are fifty thousand people in this industry, and all they want is the right to take up hobbies. Spencer Tracy takes up painting. Clark Gable takes up Idaho. Dalton Trumbo, who got the sack, takes up deep thinking. Take away their hobbies and they're unhappy. When they're unhappy, I'm unhappy. For God's sake, Tracy doesn't paint when he's acting. Gable doesn't shoot ducks. Trumbo doesn't think when he's writing for pictures. I say let them keep their goddam hobbies. They're all a bunch of capitalists anyway."

ALMOST the only motion-picture star who is taking conditions in his stride is Lassie, a reddish-haired male collie, who is probably too mixed up emotionally over being called by a girl's name to worry about the box office. Lassie is working more steadily, not only in films but on the radio, than anyone else in Hollywood. He is a star at M-G-M, the leading studio in Hollywood, which is fondly referred to out here as the Rock of Gibraltar. Visitors there are politely and desperately requested not to discuss politics or any other controversial matters with anyone on the lot. Louis B. Mayer, production chief of M-G-M, recently took personal command of the making of all pictures, of the purchase of all scripts, and of the writing of all scripts and commissary menus. The luncheon menu starts off with the announcement that meat will not be served on Tuesdays. "President Truman has appealed to Americans to conserve food, an appeal all of us will gladly heed, of course," it says. Patrons are politely and desperately encouraged to eat apple pancakes or broiled sweetbreads for lunch. Lassie eats apple pancakes for lunch. Visitors are politely and desperately introduced to Lassie, who ignores them. "We'd be in a hole if we didn't have Lassie," I heard an M-G-M man say. "We like Lassie. We're sure of Lassie. Lassie can't go out and embarrass the studio. Katharine Hepburn goes out and makes a speech for Henry Wallace. Bang! We're in trouble. Lassie doesn't make speeches. Not Lassie, thank God." At the moment, Lassie is making a picture with Edmund Gwenn about a country doctor in Scotland. Originally, the script called for a country doctor in Scotland who hated dogs, but a part has been written in for Lassie, the plot has been changed, and the picture is to be called "Master of Lassie." "It will help at the box office," Lassie's director says. Only three other pictures are in production at M-G-M, the biggest of them being a musical comedy called "Easter Parade," starring Fred Astaire and having to do with Easter on Fifth Avenue at the beginning of the century. One of Lassie's many champions at M-G-M told me that he had favored writing in a part for Lassie in "Easter Parade" but that he had dropped the idea. "I couldn't find a good Lassie angle," he explained.

An exceedingly active Hollywood agent, a woman, claims that since the start of the Congressional investigation the studios have been calling for light domestic comedies and have been turning down scripts with serious themes. "You might say the popular phrase out here now is 'Nothing on the downbeat,'" she said. "Up until a few months ago, it was 'Nothing sordid.'" The difference between "Nothing sordid" and "Nothing on the downbeat," she explained, is like the difference between light domestic comedy and *lighter* domestic comedy. After the investigation got under way, the industry called in Dr. George Gallup to take a public poll for the studios. Dr.

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ECONOMY TIP(PLE)S.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS LATELY RECEIVED.

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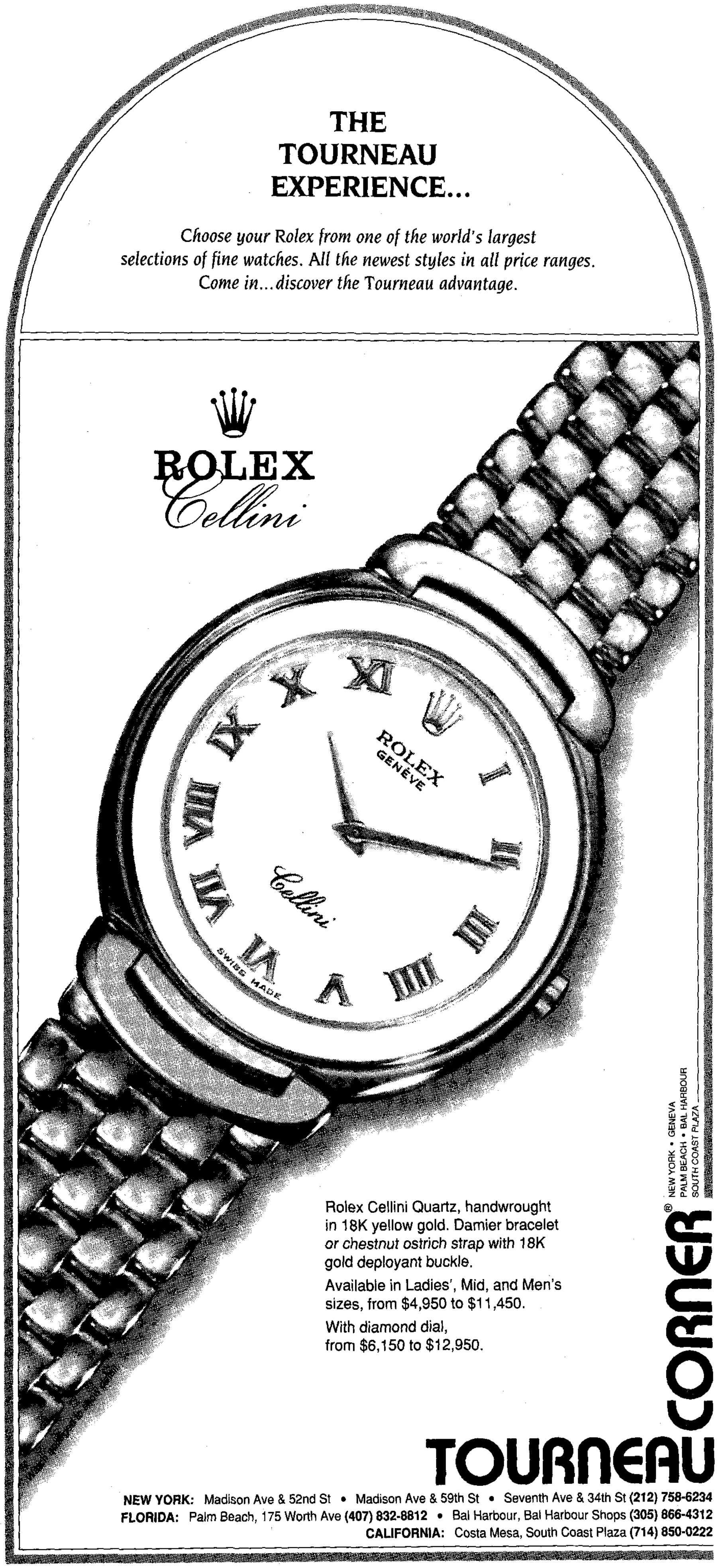
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Gallup has now submitted figures showing that seventy-one per cent of the nation's moviegoers have heard of the Congressional investigation, and that of this number fifty-one per cent think that it was a good idea, twenty-seven per cent think not, and twenty-two per cent have no opinion. Three per cent of the fifty-one per cent approving of the investigation feel that Hollywood is overrun with Communism. The studio executives are now preparing a campaign to convince this splinter three per cent, and the almost as bothersome ninety-seven per cent of the fifty-one per cent, that there is not Communism in the industry. There is some disagreement about whether the industry should tackle the unopinionated twenty-two per cent or leave it alone.

In the midst of the current preoccupation with public opinion, many stars are afraid that the public may have got a very wrong impression about them because of having seen them portray, say, a legendary hero who stole from the rich to give to the poor, or an honest, crusading district attorney, or a lonely, poetic, antisocial gangster. "We've got to resolve any conflicts between what we are and what the public has been led to believe we are," one actor told me. "We can't afford to have people think we're a bunch of strong men or crusaders." At the Warner Brothers studio, some time ago, I accepted a publicity representative's invitation to watch the shooting of a scene in "Don Juan," a Technicolor reworking of the "Don Juan" made in 1926 with John Barrymore. Filming of the production has since been called off, owing to the illness of the star, Errol Flynn, but he was still in good health the day I was there. "I want you to meet Errol," said the publicity representative. "Just don't discuss anything serious with him—politics, I mean." Being a publicity man out here seems to have taken on some of the aspects of a lawyer's and an intelligence agent's duties and responsibilities. Studio visitors who are suspected of having ways of communicating with the

public are always accompanied by a publicity man, or even two publicity men. The present-day importance of the publicity man is indicated by the fact that a member of the trade at M-G-M now occupies the office of the late Irving Thalberg, Thalberg still being to Hollywood what Peter the Great still is to Russia. I asked Flynn, who stood glittering in royal-blue tights and jerkin, golden boots, and a golden sword, how his version of "Don Juan" compared with Barrymore's. "That's like comparing two grades of cheese," he said moodily. "The older is probably the better. But I'm trying to make my Don Juan as human as possible. Jack's was a tough Don Juan. Mine is human. The script calls for one of the Spanish nobles to tell me that Spain is going to war. 'You're not afraid?' he asks me. 'Yes, I am afraid!' I reply. I added that line to the script myself. I don't want to be heroic. This picture is definitely non-subversive."

Some producers express the interesting point of view that there are no Communistic pictures, that there are only good pictures and bad pictures, and that most bad pictures are bad because writers write bad stories. "Writers don't apply themselves," I was informed by Jerry Wald, a thirty-six-year-old Warner Brothers producer, customarily described as a dynamo, who boasts that he makes twelve times as many pictures as the average producer in Hollywood. "Anatole France never sat down and said, 'Now, what did a guy write last year that I can copy this year?' " Wald assured me. "The trouble with pictures is they're cold. Pictures got to have emotion. You get emotion by doing stories on the temper of the times." The Congressional investigation, he said, would have no effect on his plans for this year's pictures on the temper of the times. These will include one on good government (with Ronald Reagan), another about underpaid schoolteachers (with Joan Crawford), and an adaptation and modernization of Maxwell Anderson's "Key Largo" (with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Edward G. Robinson, and Lionel Barrymore). "Bogart plays an ejected liberal," Wald said, "a disillusioned soldier who says nothing is worth fighting for, until he learns there's a point where every guy must fight against evil." Bogart, who two or three months before had announced that his trip to Washington to protest against the methods of the Thomas Committee hearings had been a mistake, was very eager, Wald said, to play the part of an ejected liberal.

At Wald's suggestion, I had lunch one day with several members of the "Key Largo" cast, its director, John Huston, and a publicity representative at the Lakeside Golf Club, a favorite buffet-style eating place of stars on the nearby Warner lot. The actors were in a gay mood. They had just finished rehearsing a scene (one of the new economies at Warner is to have a week of rehearsals before starting to film a picture) in which Bogart is taunted by Robinson, a gangster representing evil, for his cowardice, but is comforted by the gangster's moll, who tells Bogart, "Never mind. It's better to be a live coward than a dead hero." Bogart had not yet reached the point where a guy learns he must fight

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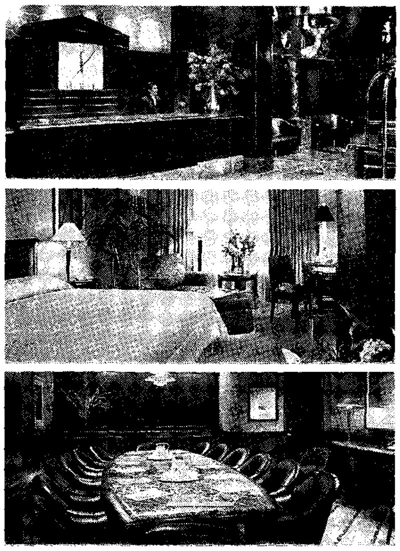

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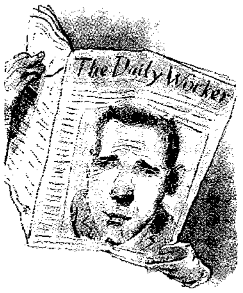
against evil. Huston was feeling particularly good, because he had just won a battle with the studio to keep in the film some lines from Franklin Roosevelt's message to the Seventy-seventh Congress on January 6, 1942: "But we of the United Nations are not making all this sacrifice of human effort and human lives to return to the kind of world we had after the last world war."

"The big shots wanted Bogie to say this in his own words," Huston explained, "but I insisted that Roosevelt's words were better."

Bogart nodded. "Roosevelt was a good politician," he said. "He could handle those babies in Washington, but they're too smart for guys like me. Hell, I'm no politician. That's what I meant when I said our Washington trip was a mistake."

"Bogie has succeeded in not being a politician," said Huston, who went to Washington with him. "Bogie owns a fifty-four-foot yawl. When you own a fifty-four-foot yawl, you've got to provide for her upkeep."

"The Great Chief died and everybody's guts died with him," Robinson said, looking stern.



"How would you like to see *your* picture on the front page of the Communist paper of Italy?" asked Bogart.

"Nyah," Robinson said, sneering.

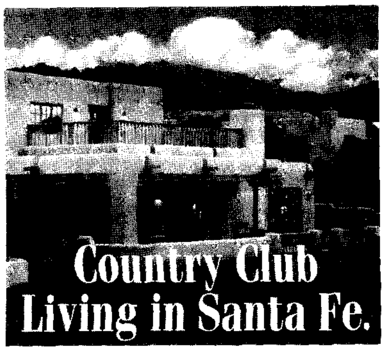
"The *Daily Worker* runs Bogie's picture and right away he's a dangerous Communist," said Miss Bacall. "What will happen if the American Legion and the Legion of Decency boycott all his pictures?"

"It's just that my picture in the *Daily Worker* offends me, Baby," said Bogart.

"Nyah," said Robinson.

"Let's eat," said Huston.

A few weeks ago, many people in Hollywood received through the mails a booklet called "Screen Guide for Americans," published by the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals and containing a list of "Do"s and "Don't"s. "This is the raw iron from which a new curtain around



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Hollywood will be fashioned," one man assured me solemnly. "This is the first step—not to fire people, not to get publicity, not to clean Communism out of motion pictures but to rigidly control all the contents of all pictures for Right Wing political purposes." The Motion Picture Association of America has not yet publicly adopted the "Screen Guide for Americans" in place of its own "A Code to Govern the Making of Motion and Talking Pictures," which advances such tenets as "The just rights, history, and feelings of any nation are entitled to consideration and respectful treatment" and "The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy." Although it is by no means certain that the industry has got around to following these old rules, either to the letter or in the spirit, there is a suspicion that it may have already begun at least to paraphrase some of the "Screen Guide" 's pronouncements, which appear under such headings as "Don't Smear the Free Enterprise System," "Don't Deify the 'Common Man,' " "Don't Glorify the Collective," "Don't Glorify Failure," "Don't Smear Success," and "Don't Smear Industrialists." "All too often, industrialists, bankers, and businessmen are presented on the screen as villains, crooks, chiselers, or exploiters," the "Guide" observes. "It is the *moral* (no, not just political but *moral*) duty of every decent man in the motion picture industry to throw into the ashcan, where it belongs, every story that smears industrialists as such." Another admonition reads, "Don't give to your characters—as a sign of villainy, as a damning characteristic—a desire to make money." And another, "Don't permit any disparagement or defamation of personal success. It is the Communists' intention to make people think that personal success is somehow achieved at the expense of others and that every successful man has hurt somebody by becoming successful." The booklet warns, "Don't tell people that man is a helpless, twisted, drooling, sniveling, neurotic weakling. Show the world an *American* kind of man, for a change." The "Guide" instructs people in the industry, "Don't let yourself be fooled when the Reds tell you what they want to destroy are men like Hitler and Mussolini. What they want to destroy are men like Shakespeare, Chopin, and Edison." Still another of the "Don't"s

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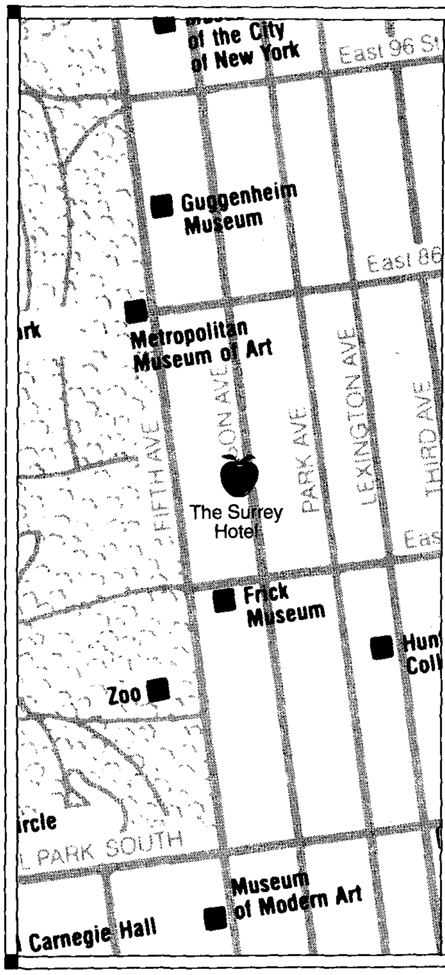
says, "Don't ever use any lines about 'the common man' or 'the little people.' It is not the American idea to be either 'common' or 'little.' " This despite the fact that Eric Johnston, testifying before the Thomas Committee, said, "Most of us in America are just little people, and loose charges can hurt little people." And one powerful man here has said to me, "We're not going to pay any attention to the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. We *like* to talk about 'the little people' in this business."

I was given a copy of "Screen Guide for Americans" by Mrs. Lela Rogers, one of the founders of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. Mrs. Rogers, the mother of Ginger, is a pretty, blond-haired lady with a vibrant, birdlike manner. Mrs. Rogers is also writing screenplays. I wanted to know if she was following the "Do"s and "Don't"s of the "Screen Guide for Americans." "You just bet I am," she said. "My friend Ayn Rand wrote it, and sticking to it is easy as pie. I've just finished a shooting script about a man who learns how to live after he is dead."

Other people in the industry admit that they are following the "Guide" in scripts about the living. One man who is doing that assured me that he nevertheless doesn't need it, that it offers him nothing he didn't already know. "This is new only to the youngsters out here," he said. "They haven't had their profound intentions knocked out of them yet, or else they're still earning under five hundred a week. As soon as you become adjusted in this business, you don't need the 'Screen Guide' to tell you what to do." A studio executive in charge of reading scripts believes that Hollywood has a new kind of self-censorship. "It's automatic, like shifting gears," he explained. "I now read scripts through the eyes of the D.A.R., whereas formerly I read them through the eyes of my boss. Why, I suddenly find myself beating my breast and proclaiming my patriotism and exclaiming that I love my wife and kids, of which I have four, with a fifth on the way. I'm all loused up. I'm scared to death, and nobody can tell me it isn't because I'm afraid of being investigated."

William Wyler, who directed the Academy Award picture "The Best



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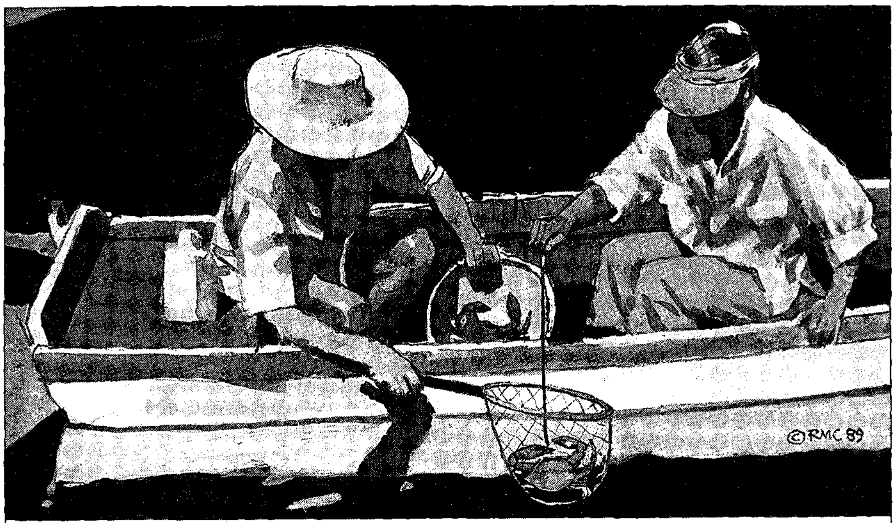

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Years of Our Lives," told me he is convinced that he could not make that picture today and that Hollywood will produce no more films like "The Grapes of Wrath" and "Crossfire." "In a few months, we won't be able to have a heavy who is an American," he said. The scarcity of roles for villains has become a serious problem, particularly at studios specializing in Western pictures, where writers are being harried for not thinking up any new ones. "Can I help it if we're running out of villains?" a writer at one of these studios asked me. "For years I've been writing scripts about a Boy Scout-type cowboy in love with a girl. Their fortune and happiness are threatened by a banker holding a mortgage over their heads, or by a big landowner, or by a crooked sheriff. Now they tell me that bankers are out. Anyone holding a mortgage is out. Crooked public officials are out. All I've got left is a cattle rustler. What the hell am I going to do with a cattle rustler?"

Hollywood's current hypersensitivity has created problems more subtle than the shortage of heavies. "Treasure of Sierra Madre," a film about prospecting for gold, was to have begun and ended with the subtitle "Gold, Mister, is worth what it is because of the human labor that goes into the finding and getting of it." The line is spoken by Walter Huston in the course of the picture. John Huston, who directed it, says that he couldn't persuade the studio to let the line appear on the screen. "It was all on account of the word 'labor,' " he told me. "That word looks dangerous in print, I guess." He paused, then added thoughtfully, "You can sneak it onto the sound track now and then, though." At a preview, in Hartford, Connecticut, of "Arch of Triumph," attended by its director, Lewis Milestone, and by Charles Einfield, president of Enterprise Productions, which brought it out, the manager of the theatre asked Einfield whether it was necessary to use the word "refugees" so often in the picture. "All the way back to New York," says Milestone, "Charlie kept muttering, 'Maybe we mention the word "refugees" too many times?' 'But the picture is *about* refugees,' I told him. 'What can we do now? Make a new picture?' "

Jack L. Warner, busiest of the Brothers, is genially inclined to bolster up the courage of those who are ready to throw in the towel. "Don't worry!" he roars, slapping the backs of the lesser men around him. "Congress can't last forever!"

MOST producers stick firmly to the line that there is no Communism whatever in the industry and that there are no Communistic pictures. "We're going to make any kind of pictures we like, and nobody is going to tell us what to do," I was informed by Dore Schary, the R.K.O. vice-president and winner of the Golden Slipper Square Club's Humanitarian Award. In sixteen years, Schary pio-

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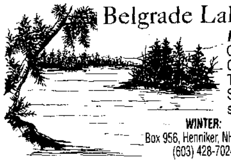


neered from a $100-a-week job as a junior writer to his present position, which brings him around $500,000 a year. When he testified before the Thomas Committee, he said that R.K.O. would hire anyone it chose, solely on the basis of his talent, who had not been proved to be subversive. The R.K.O. Board of Directors met soon afterward and voted not to hire any known Communists. Schary then voted, like the other producers, to blacklist the ten men because they had been cited for contempt. He is talked about a good deal in Hollywood. Many of his colleagues are frequently critical of the course he has taken, and yet they understand why he has done what he's done. "I was faced with the alternative of supporting the stand taken by my company or of quitting my job," Schary told me. "I don't believe you should quit under fire. Anyway, I like making pictures. I want to stay in the industry. I like it." Schary is one of the few Hollywood executives who will talk to visitors without having a publicity man sit in on the conversation. "The great issue would have been joined if the ten men had only stood up and said whether or not they were Communists," he continued. "That's all they had to do. As it is, ten men have been hurt and nobody can be happy. We haven't done any work in weeks. Now is the time for all of us to go back to the business of making picures, good pictures, in favor of anything we please." I asked Schary what he was planning to make this year. "I will assemble a list," he said. He assembled the following out of his memory, and I wrote them down: "Honored Glory" (in favor of honoring nine unknown soldiers), "Weep No More" (in favor of law and order), "Evening in Modesto" (also in favor of law and order), "The Boy with Green Hair" (in favor of peace), "Education of a Heart" (in favor of professional football), "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House" (in favor of Cary Grant), "The Captain Was a Lady" (in favor of Yankee clipper ships), "Baltimore Escapade" (in favor of a Protestant minister and his family having fun).

"Committee or no Committee," Schary said, "we're going to make all these pictures exactly the way we made pictures before." ♦

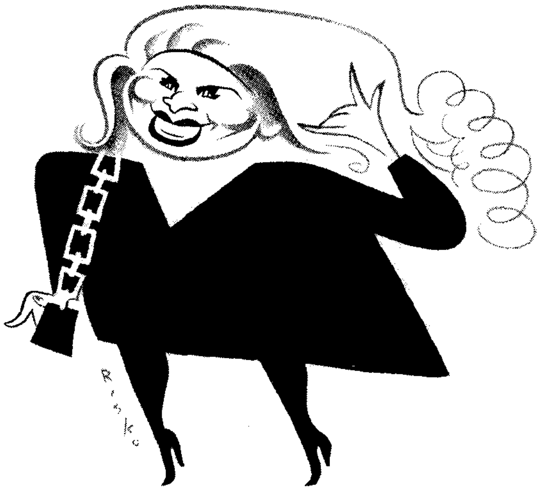
ANNALS OF SHOWTOWN

AFTER THE PARTY

Sue Mengers used to be one of the most formidable agents in Hollywood. Then the business changed, but she didn't.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

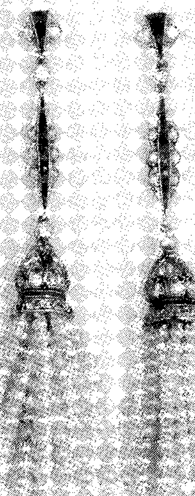
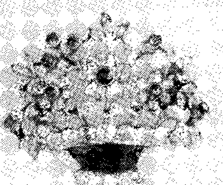
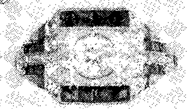
MIDMORNING, on a blustery day in New York, Sue Mengers is in her New York hotel, the Lowell, killing time. She doesn't know where she's going from here. She has an apartment in Paris and a house in Beverly Hills, a room key in Manhattan, the story of Hollywood of the late sixties and seventies in her head, and no particular plans. She fidgets around the room. She wants to open the window for you or lend you a sweater if it's open too much or get you cappuccino and a nice breakfast even if the temperature is perfect and you want nothing to eat. She has the fussy, buzzing restlessness of someone who wants to be occupied doing something for someone else. Her phone rings. "Yes, hello," she says, answering impatiently. "No, no, I don't want to go to the Russian Tea Room. I was there the other day, and it was so . . . stressful." She coughs and listens, staring hard at the floor. "O.K., we can do the Russian Tea Room. We can do it."



"You have to assure your client that he's not cold even when he is."

ROBERT RISKO

She will be having lunch with Helen Gurley Brown, an old friend. After that, she's not sure. She doesn't think she'll stay long in New York. "New York is such a working place," she says. "If you're here but you're not working, it's hard to fit in." She will probably go back to Paris. She doesn't talk about going back to Los Angeles. For almost two decades, she was one of the most powerful agents and most commanding hostesses in Hollywood. She rose fast in a business that was then dominated by men. She outmanned many of them: she was the toughest negotiator, the bluntest adversary, the nerviest deal maker. In her years at Creative Management Associates, which then became International Creative Management, from 1967 to 1986, she made a lot of movies happen. She represented, among others, Candice Bergen, Faye Dunaway, Brian De Palma, and Anthony Perkins. Then she lost one big client, and then another, and her way of doing business—all personality, no strategy—started to seem an anachronism. She no longer fits in. She hasn't had more than a few people over for dinner since 1986. She doesn't want to go to screenings anymore; she doesn't want to go to big parties. As she tells it, Hollywood is a club that she loved to belong to, yet you can tell she never felt she really belonged. For a while, people appreciated her usefulness, which is not the same as belonging, although for a stretch it can look the same. She was tactless and contemptuous, and made enemies needlessly, either because she knew in her heart that someday she would no longer belong and so indulged a preëmptive bitterness or because she believed she'd belong forever and so could afford to do anything. She coughs again. She says, "I feel just like the Queen Mother, because I have this association with Hollywood but no function there anymore. I'm just like her." She smooths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her hair, looks away, and then says, "Only not as rich."

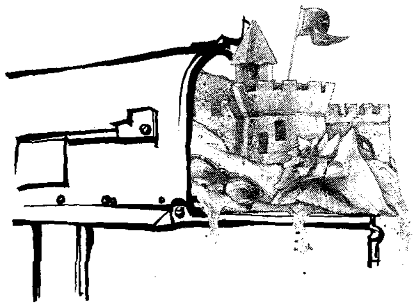
As soon as you talk to Mengers, you can imagine that on the phone, making deals, she must have been formidable. Her voice is a pebbly alto with a little tremor that snags on a syllable now and again. She has a powerful way with a pause. She speaks deliberately, stamping everything she says with plain, braggy boldness. She didn't learn English until she was six years old, after her family escaped the Holocaust and emigrated from Hamburg to New York; the pause and the deliberateness may not be purposeful affect so much as the result of elocution lessons she was given as a child to banish her accent. She is small, rounded, with a sweet smile, a doll's nose, tiny feet, and a head of silky blond hair. Being a blonde is a theme in her personal history. A lot of her stories are punctuated this way: "And here I was, this blonde . . ." "They weren't expecting this blonde . . ." When she got out to Hollywood, in 1968, after working as a theatre agent for C.M.A. in New York, the only blondes were in the movies, not making deals. She eventually made it into the movies, only she was played by a blonder blonde—Dyan Cannon, who portrayed Mengers in the 1973 movie "The Last of Sheila."

No one ever asked her to the movies. "I would have Jack and Anjelica over," she says. "It was for a purpose. They were not my *friends*. It was never 'Oh, Sue, it's Anjelica, let's go have dinner, let's go out and see something.' " She knew everyone. She would bully her way through a day of meetings, storm out of a few of them. Then she would put on a little party. "It was my power base. A man in this business would not have had to put on a party. Someone with another power base would not have had to entertain." She didn't make an issue of it—and she even declined a request to help organize Women in Film. She just gave more parties, the best parties. People clamored to come to her parties. "They didn't come because they were my *friends*," she says. "They didn't come because they were so impressed with my warmth as a hostess." Her parties were celebrated—perfectly cast, staged, and choreographed. "I never had too many actresses who would feel competitive, and I would have enough studio heads so the actors could meet the important people. I never invited anyone who wasn't successful. I was ruthless about it. It was all stars. I would look around my living room at all of them, and even *I'd* be impressed with myself. The parties were great." But the parties were chores. "The parties were always given to accomplish something. I never just *had* people over. I had them over for a reason. I never had a good time for a minute."

She was incurably starstruck. "I was this kid from New York who had never left the city, who had never been to California, who had no plan, who thought she would end up as, possibly, a secretary. I came to Hollywood, and it was magic, absolute magic. There were stars everywhere. They were exactly as they appeared in the movies." She still managed to be an inflexible snob. "I had *no* interest in unknowns. Anyone can sign an unknown. Only a big agent can sign a big star. I was sent Dustin Hoffman when he was starting out. My attitude was: What do I want with this short, inarticulate, mumbling actor? I sent a sarcastic note to that effect. I was only interested in superstars."

For a long time, she was in love with her business. "I thought being an agent was better than being President of the United States," she says. "I couldn't imagine more to life than getting a good part for Nick Nolte." She now believes she wasted her life on her business. "I never had children," she says. "I didn't think I could both be a great agent to Barbra Streisand and be a mother to a kid. I chose Streisand. I wouldn't choose Streisand if I could do it again." She was naïve and was finally betrayed. "I never thought of it as work. I loved it. I was good at it because I loved it so much. I never imagined that any of these actors and actresses would ever get old. I never imagined they would ever leave me."

The most fun she had was working with Barbra Streisand. "It was totally time-consuming but totally stimulating," she says. "We did 'What's Up, Doc?' and 'A Star Is Born.' How can I get a dig in on Jon Peters? Let's just say that much of the time I spent on Barbra was spent trying to control Jon." Mengers had arranged for Streisand to star in "All Night Long," directed by Jean-Claude Tramont, who is Mengers' husband, and also starring Gene Hackman, another of Mengers' clients. It was rumored that Streisand was furious when the movie



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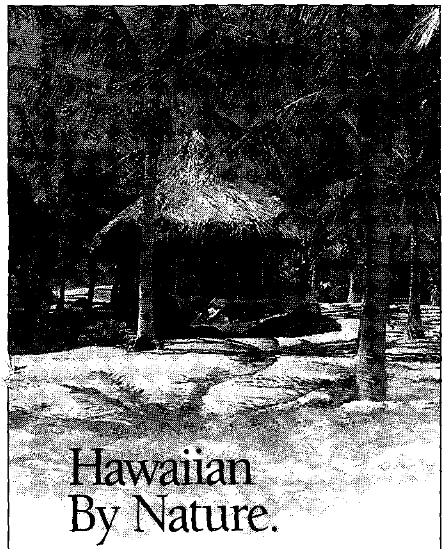
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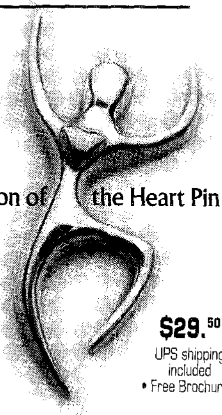
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failed, and decided, in 1981, to leave her. Other clients followed. Mengers' ruthless exclusivity failed her. She had no one in reserve once her big clients left, because she had never had time for anyone other than big clients. She says, "I overdosed on the industry. I lost it. I lost my enthusiasm. It got to be less fun. The actors stopped being *movie stars*. I found myself becoming irritable. Suddenly, all anyone could talk about was hardware. I wasn't a visionary, like Mike Ovitz. I never was interested in producing, or in sitting in a room with a group of Japanese businessmen talking about the sale of Sony. I wanted to help the stars. I'm not so knocked out by Mike Ovitz. What he does isn't being an agent. If Mike Ovitz quit the business and opened a chain of karate schools tomorrow, there is not one picture that would stop shooting. It just wouldn't matter that much. Maybe it was my age that made me burn out. Maybe because I did what I did so intensely. Men usually work as agents and then move on to the studios, because they find nurturing people and servicing them too demeaning. When I started, everyone was hot—Redford, Streisand, Jack Nicholson. But then it becomes harder. It's hard to force yourself to be an agent, because you have to get it up all the time to assure your client that he's not cold even when he is."

Once her exodus of clients started, Mengers began to be less useful. She says she felt underappreciated. She quit I.C.M. in 1986. "I never missed it, I swear to you." She managed to stay away only two years. She returned for a disastrous three years at William Morris, during which none of her old clients would come back to her. "I genuinely tried to sign people, but the reputation of William Morris was such that people would flee from it. I had no idea. Many of my past clients, like Christopher Walken and Farrah Fawcett and Jonathan Demme, had fled *in horror* from William Morris and weren't interested in coming back again. I managed to sign Richard Pryor, and that was it. I tried to play the part of the enthusiastic agent, but the juice was gone. My specialness was always my total love of talent. That thing was gone."

She left the industry in 1991, undoubtedly for good. She says, "I do wish I'd gotten richer. But otherwise Hollywood doesn't owe me shit." ♦

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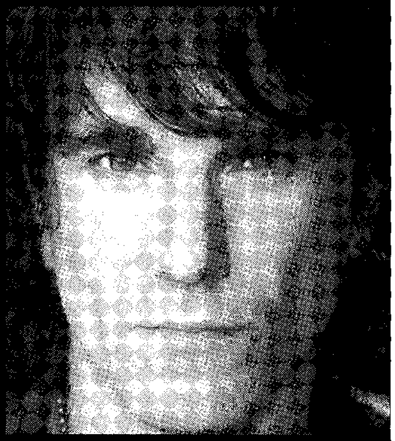

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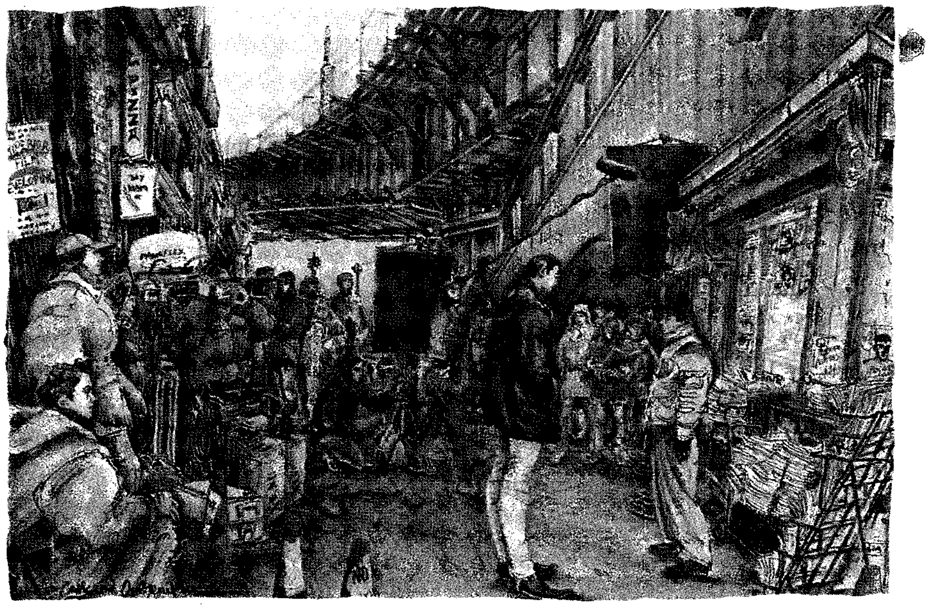
NEW YORK SCENE

THE "LITTLE ODESSA" FILE

On the set of a young director's low-budget, début feature, real-life dramas become entangled with fictional ones.

BY ARTHUR LUBOW



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CATHERINE DUBRIEL

As an icy wind blew across a Brooklyn pier, three men in leather jackets shoved and prodded a bound man wearing pajamas toward a hillock of refuse. Another man, carrying a pistol, led the way. Behind them, ghostly against the night sky, a decaying abandoned grain silo loomed like an industrial cathedral over a landscape of rusty metal, rotted wood, tires, and old pipe. Three trees, wintry and bare, had sprouted in the garbage, and, with the captive made to kneel before them, the mound creepily resembled an altar. The gunman fired, and red gunk spurted out the back of the man's bowed head. The killer walked off, but one of his henchmen stooped beside the body for a moment. A knife flashed. With a grunt of contempt, the thug flung a severed tongue into the rubbish.

I had gone shopping for the tongue two days earlier with Jennifer Alex, the assistant prop master for "Little Odessa," a low-budget movie that was being filmed primarily in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn. For three dollars and seventy cents, Alex bought five calf tongues, packaged in a plastic-wrapped polystyrene tray, at Brighton King Meats. She and the prop master, Dave Doernberg, then pre-sliced the tongues into plausibly man-size pieces. But the scene was being shot with a wide lens, in the dark, without closeups, so the tongue would be virtually invisible. "Story of my life," Doernberg said.

A certain amount of waste is built into the moviemaking process as a safeguard against greater waste, because the most precious commodity is time. In the making of "Little Odessa," each day that was added to the schedule cost about thirty-five thousand dollars. The crew had to anticipate whatever it might need. For the two nights of filming the murder, at the dump on the Brooklyn waterfront, the company had rented a special generator to drive two Lightning Strikes! machines, at a total cost of about eighteen hundred dollars. Bob Potter, who owns the Lightning Strikes! franchise for New York and New England, demonstrated his device to the director, James Gray, who had ordered up the special effect to add atmosphere to the scene. Potter threw a switch, and zigzags of light, out of "Frankenstein" or "Night on Bald Mountain," illuminated the sky. Gray shook his head. "No, it's too much," he said. "It doesn't work." Potter eventually packed up the equipment

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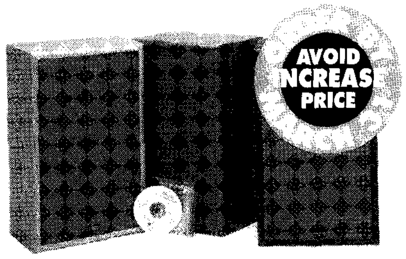

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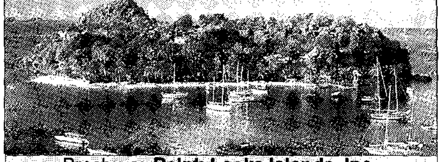

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and dragged it back to his van. "I feel bad that they're not going to use it, but they called me in for two nights," he said. "Hey, you can't get soft in this business. They'll roll all over you."

"Little Odessa" is an independent movie that was shot in New York this winter, with a twenty-eight-day shooting schedule and a budget of about two million dollars. It is a gritty family drama set in an immigrant Russian Jewish community, and it features three interesting young actors, none of them household names, and two older stars, Maximilian Schell and Vanessa Redgrave. In the tight-knit, competitive world of independent movies, those are the key facts about the project. The stars and the subject matter determined whether the movie would be financed, and at what budget.

Harder to pin down were the quality of the script and the talent of the filmmaker. "Little Odessa" is the first feature film of its writer and director, James Gray, a twenty-four-year-old graduate of the University of Southern California film school. Although he's six feet two inches tall and sports a wispy auburn beard, Gray seems even younger than his years. "I'm so young, I'm afterbirth," he likes to joke. He does like to joke, and he mimics voices with amusing accuracy, but he can also veer quickly into serious, late-night-in-the-dorm discussions of his favorite musicians, writers, and directors. Two of his favorite words are "genius" and "super-genius," which he uses as adjectives, along with the roughly equivalent phrase "the greatest thing ever." "Have you seen 'Rocco and His Brothers'?" he might ask. "Isn't that the greatest thing ever?" That he is not using this phrase literally, as a superlative, is made clear when he says immediately afterward, "Have you seen 'Circle of Deceit'? That's the greatest thing ever also." Pale and freckled, he is engaging and far from suave. He speaks in an oddly formal manner, like a precocious six-year-old whose conversation is drawn from books and peppered with big words, some of which he doesn't quite get right. "Being in New York is creatively enervating," he said when we first met. "It galvanizes you back into life when you come here."

Not many twenty-four-year-olds get to direct a feature film. Gray did it by rising to the top of a system at the

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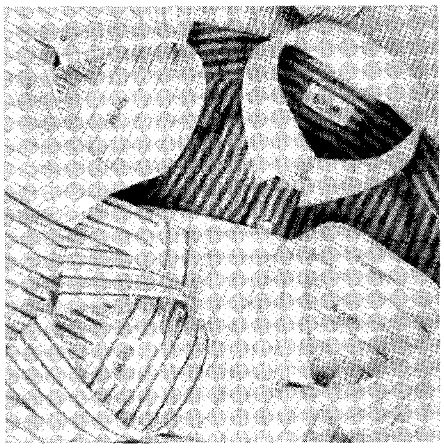

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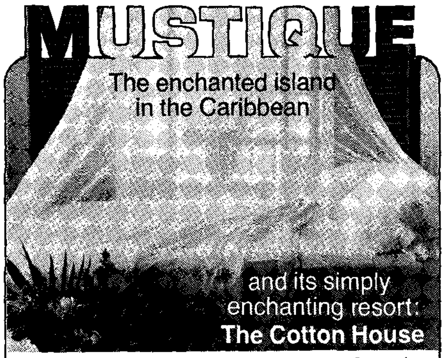
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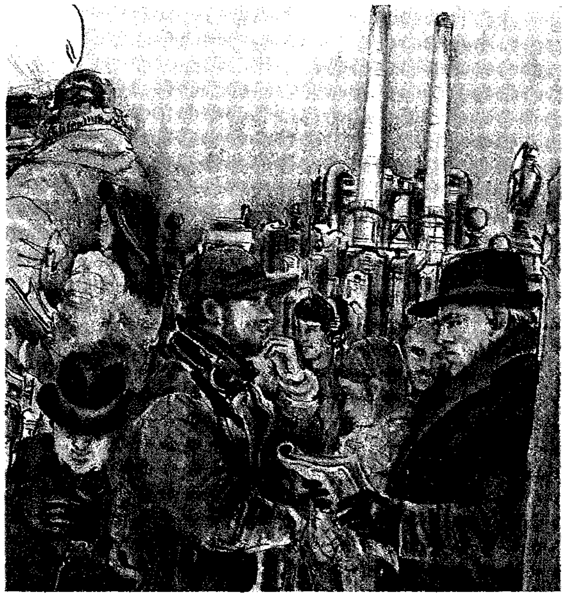
U.S.C. film school which replicates the Hollywood system outside its gates. The quirky flair of his student film, "Cowboys and Angels," propelled him to a meeting with Jeremy Zimmer, a leading agent at United Talent Agency, who took him on as a client. The student movie, which lasted twelve minutes, also caught the eye of Paul Webster, an independent producer (of "Romeo Is Bleeding" and "Bob Roberts"), when he screened it along with twenty or thirty other student films that had been well received that year. "It was in a completely different league from all the others," Webster told me.

Webster is a forty-one-year-old Englishman with long, graying blond hair, a neatly trimmed beard, and a way of burnishing almost everything he says with a dry, ironic humor. As impressed by Gray in person as by his work, he began sending the young director screenplays to consider. "I would get four words into the script," Gray recalled. "I would read, 'A hesitant rookie cop,' and I would throw it away. I felt I had to control the material, and the way to do it was to write the best script I could." He started a screenplay, "Mecca," set in the disco culture of the seventies. "With the exception of the year my mother died, the first year out of film school was the worst year of my life," Gray said. "I slept till eleven o'clock, I ate pretzels, I played video games, the phone never rang, and I wrote 'Mecca.' I finished writing 'Mecca' in January of 1992 and got tons of people calling me to say that they had passed. There was a considerable degree of heat when I got out of film school. It's frightening how fast that heat dissipates."



The crew resembled an élite battalion.

"Mecca" was a script for a big movie. "There was no way a twenty-two-year-old was going to make a thirty-million-dollar picture about a record executive in the seventies," Webster told me. "I suggested he make something that drew from his experience." The big themes that fascinated Gray were youthful alienation and emotional stultification; the event in his own life that had affected him most profoundly was his mother's dying, of a brain tumor, while he was a U.S.C. freshman. When he came up with the idea of transposing this material from the middle-class Jewish neighborhood in Queens where he grew up to the more flamboyant setting of Brighton Beach, Webster was delighted. "The more it could be identified with a genre, the easier it would be for me," the producer remarked. "So when I pitch it to someone, in two minutes they'll get it. You say, 'Family tragedy set in Russian Jewish gangster milieu in Brighton Beach.' Bang. You've got it." Still, what Webster was selling was a depressing movie without box-office stars. He needed spin on his pitch.

The more elements there are in the package, the easier it is to market. Zimmer sent a copy of the script to Tim Roth, a highly respected English actor in his early thirties, who is also represented by United Talent. Roth met for lunch with Gray and Webster, and signed on in November, 1992. I asked Roth what his first impression of Gray was. "Woody Allen on speed," he said. Roth gave a copy of the script to Nick Wechsler, who is both an independent producer and a partner in Addis Wechsler, a high-profile talent-management firm in Los Angeles. Enthusiastic about both the screenplay and Gray, Wechsler joined the project as executive producer. He had been instrumental in such career-making independent films as Steven Soderbergh's "sex, lies, and videotape" and Gus Van Sant, Jr.,'s "Drugstore Cowboy." His joining the team

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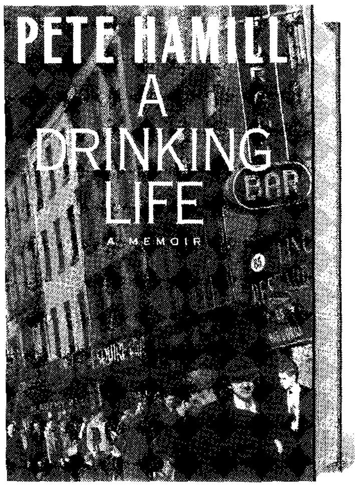

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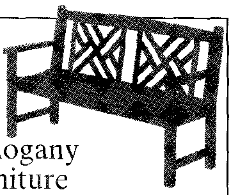

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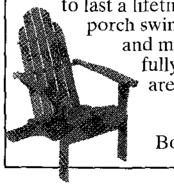

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gave "Little Odessa" a lustre of hipness and credibility. And having Roth on board helped to land the other young leads—Edward Furlong, who co-starred in "Terminator 2" and "American Heart," and Moira Kelly, who was in "Chaplin." All of them worked for scale plus ten per cent (for the agent), or $1,853.50 a week, and a profit participation, should there be any profits. (Roth's dialect coach earned more up front than he did.) With those elements in place, Webster and Wechsler were able to secure their modest budget: half from New Line Cinema, for foreign-distribution rights, the rest from Live Home Video, for American rights.

Later, the producers signed Schell, also at scale plus ten. Redgrave joined only four weeks before principal photography began; she would receive twenty-five thousand dollars for two days of shooting, without profit participation. The financial backers added Redgrave's salary to the stipulated budget with pleasure: the marketing value of her name is far higher than twenty-five thousand dollars.

The night the murder was filmed on the pier was a big night for Drew Jiritano, the special-effects man. The brutal cold and the garbage were real, and it was Jiritano's job to make the murder look equally real. He attached a blood bag to the victim's back and ran a wire from it to a detonator. Holding the detonator, he hid behind the garbage mound. When the actor fired a pistol loaded with blanks, Jiritano threw a switch, setting off a small explosive charge that burst the blood bag. This process is called "squibbing." Jiritano's business card identifies him as a Special Effects Pyrotechnician. On the card, the letters in "Pyrotechnician" are either being ripped apart by bullets or erupting in flame—at that size, it's hard to tell. His card, like the badge on his charcoal-gray jumpsuit, is decorated with stars and stripes. An uncle who worked on movie crews drew him into the business, and he has now been a special-effects man for thirteen years. "I do almost any non-union B movie that comes into New York," he told me.

The schism between union and non-union movies is profound. "Little Odessa" is about as big-budget a movie as can be shot in New York or Los Angeles

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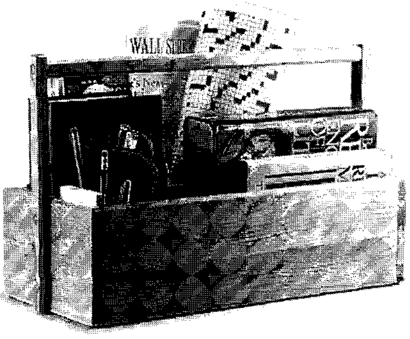

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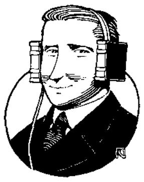

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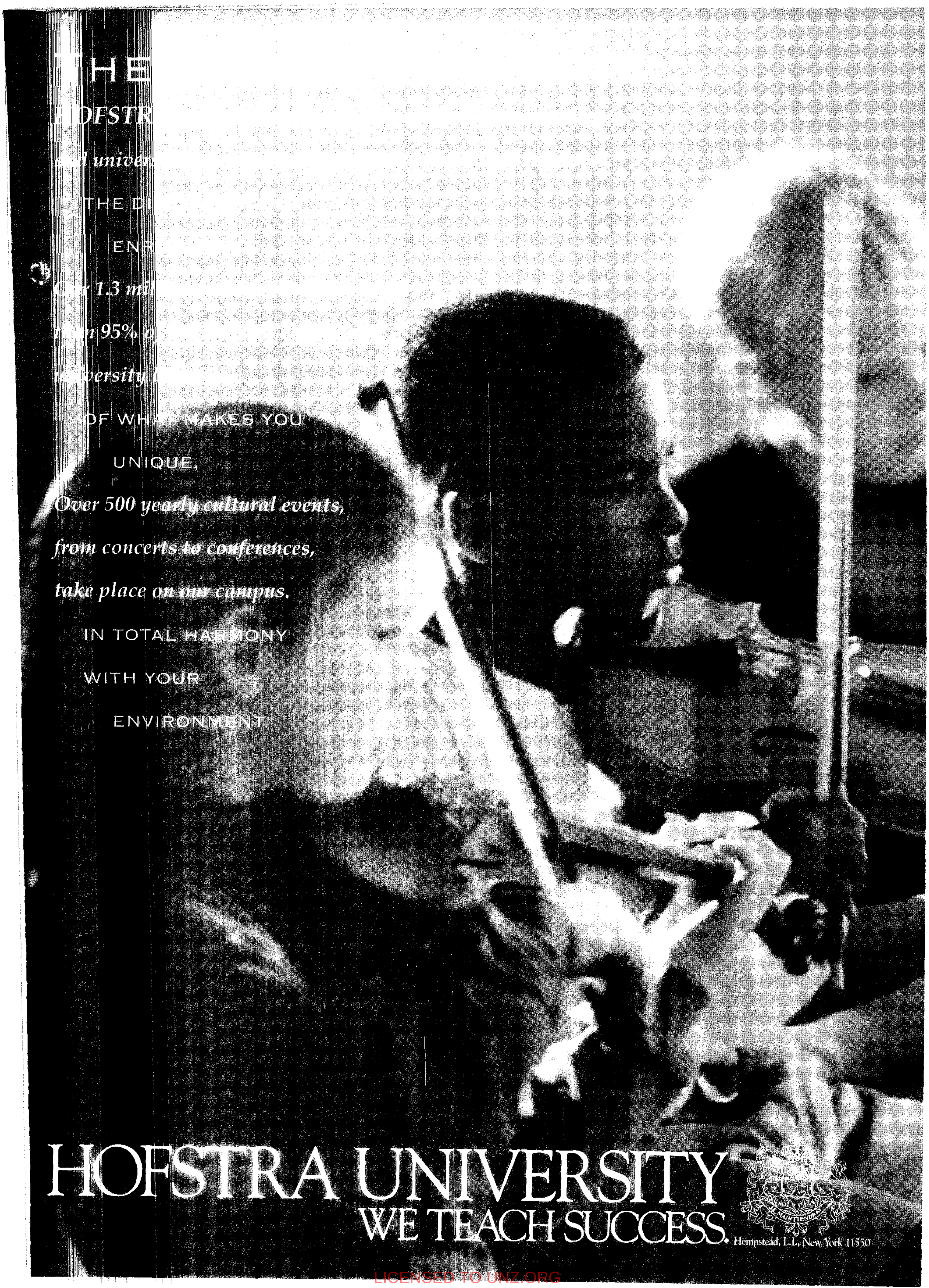
without a unionized crew. (Avoiding the unions saves the producers hefty payments for pensions and fringe benefits.) A non-union crew looks and sounds completely different from a union crew: it's younger, artsier, and better educated. The key grip studied theatre at the University of Michigan, and the on-set dresser edits documentary films when she's not putting cigarette butts in ashtrays. On "Little Odessa," the only union members were the actors, who belong to the Screen Actors Guild (which bears the same relationship to a typical union that Hollywood does to Dearborn), and the truck drivers, who are Teamsters. The Teamsters earned about twice what the key grip, gaffer, and other crew department heads were making. While the rest of the crew were mostly in their twenties and lived downtown, the drivers were on the far side of forty and went home to Long Island or New Jersey. After two weeks on the set, I had barely seen the drivers, so I stopped one, Dan Palmer, and talked to him in his cab. He had the radio tuned to a country station and was wearing a Garth Brooks baseball cap. Copies of *Tattoo* and *American Iron* were lying in back. He said that he and the two other drivers "feel like the grandparents" on the set. He didn't seem terribly interested in the movie or the crew. For a Teamster, the chief accomplishment is finding regular work. Palmer drove only four months last year. "It's a job where you got to have a job on the side to put food on the table," he said.

The youthful crew of "Little Odessa" resembled a volunteer army—not today's version, in which the soldiers are bootstrapping their way out of poverty, but the sort that existed in the Old South, where military service was something a gentleman might undertake, especially if he didn't know what else to do. For many of the young people on the crew, working in movie production was a means of holding on to collegiate artistic dreams, a way of postponing commitment and compromise. Ten of the youngest were unpaid internes, and almost all the others had started out that way.

Annie Ballard, who is twenty-seven, was the on-set dresser, which means that she supervised anything on the set that the actors didn't touch. (Once they do touch something, it's a prop.) Before



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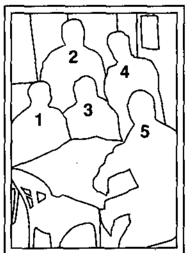

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Northwest recycles enough paper to save 40,000 trees a year. ©1994 Northwest Airlines a scene at a newsstand could be shot, Ballard had to replace the Snickers bars and M&M's with Chiclets and Clark bars, and the *Newsweeks* and *Esquires* with *Times* and *GQs;* without "product clearance" from the manufacturer, an item can't be prominently displayed in a movie. On another location, she dealt with the opposite problem, papering over a large Marlboro ad because the director thought it looked like "product placement"; that is, as if a manufacturer had paid to exhibit it in the movie. Once Ballard had covered the ad with flyers, she wet them down with coffee to give them an authentically dingy look. Her arsenal included Streaks 'n' Tips temporary-highlighting hair color and Blair dulling spray, to grime up clean surfaces. She had studied film at Harvard, and now she was employed as a kind of reverse cleaning woman. She considered herself fortunate. She had worked for nothing in 1990 on an even lower-budget independent film as a way of breaking into movie production. "In a lot of ways, it's a rich kid's sport," she said. She remarked that, along with their youth and education, members of the crew had something else in common. "They're here because they could not stand being in an office," she said. "You would not tolerate this insanity if the other insanity wasn't worse."

THE main set of "Little Odessa" was a large, dust-shrouded two-bedroom apartment in Brighton Beach, which may be the most depressing living space I have ever entered. The living-room wallpaper was a beautiful dusky-pink design of large leaves, but it was fifty years old and was peeling off in patches. An ancient record-player was crusted with rust. Next to a single bed in the main bedroom were cards with phone numbers: an ambulance company, a hospital insurance number, a daughter's business phone. On the walls were two framed pictures of clowns—one scowling, one grimacing—and a Jewish calendar printed by Menorah Chapels, a funeral home in Staten Island. In return for five thousand dollars, the seventy-seven-year-old man who, with his family, has occupied this apartment for fifty-five years agreed to move out for three weeks. "When we walked in, it looked dark and grimy," Kevin Thompson, the movie's production de-

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To describe what it's like to work with Tim Burton is really very simple. Either he responds to something a writer has written or he doesn't. Either it works for him or it doesn't. If it doesn't, no amount of explaining is going to make a difference. Tim's mind does not obey the laws of reason—it follows instead the whimsical ways of instinct. Which also makes working with him a bit complicated.

We were introduced in 1985 by our agents at William Morris. At that point, Tim had directed the sweet and sly "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" and I had written an odd gothic novel called "First Born." I liked his movie and he liked my book, so the agents arranged for us to have lunch, and we became friends.

It was Tim who had the inspired image for "Edward Scissorhands." I loved the image. As a metaphor it was ridiculous. It was also sublime. Immediately, I saw situations: someone with scissors instead of hands can't have contact; he destroys everything he touches; he wants to belong, to be normal, but, by his very nature, he isn't and never could be (a tragedy that most of us would claim as our own).

It was over the top. It was melodramatic. It was dumb. It was so dumb it was smart. I was in heaven.

Our story meetings were few. Tim would lie prostrate on one of the couches in his office; I would lie prostrate on the other—both of us suddenly exhausted, somehow feverish. The room would have taken on the dizzying atmosphere of a sick room—even with the blinds lowered and the slats rotated shut against the glare outside.

The conversations consisted of fragments. Neither of us finished a sentence since neither of us needed to. Interruptions weren't interruptions. They were overlaps.

"Well," Tim would say, "we can't forget that it's really about . . . you know, what you and I both love is—"

"Contrasts," I'd say.

He'd smile with satisfaction. "That beautiful/ugly thing."

"Exactly. The surface is—"

"Shiny," Tim would say, "but underneath—"

"Yeah," I'd agree, thinking, Of course, the underneath has to be, psychologically speaking, anyway, really horrible.

"*Really* horrible," Tim would emphasize, having heard the thought I didn't have to say.

We'd both laugh, enjoying the prospect of exploring the horrible beneath the beautiful.

Tim would then add, "But it's also, it's also got to have, you know . . ." He'd drift off.

I did know. "Feelings."

"Feelings," he'd confirm.

During the actual writing of the script, Tim left me alone—so alone, in fact, that I never heard from him, which was unnerving and comforting at the same time. When I was finished, I gave him the script. He was shooting "Beetlejuice" and was much preoccupied, so I waited. Three months? Six months? I've forgotten now, but it was ages before he read it. Tim does one thing at a time—which is great when it's your one thing and excruciating when it isn't.

At long last, Tim read the script—and that was that. He would make the movie. He never sat down with me to scrutinize the pages. He didn't want to mess around with the dialogue. He didn't require a line-by-line exegesis. Simple. A bit complicated, too. ♦

---

signer, said. "It had the smell of death about it already."

In the script, the set is called "Reuben's apartment." Reuben is a boy (Furlong), whose mother (Redgrave) is dying of a brain tumor. His father, Arkady (Schell), is a Russian-born intellectual who runs a newsstand under the elevated tracks. His brother, Joshua (Roth), is a Russian Mafia hit man who left home years ago but has returned to Brighton Beach for a contract murder. It is a grim movie. The old man's apartment seemed the ideal setting for a tale of misery, but by the time the art department had finished with it little that was original remained, except the wallpaper, the matching linoleum, and the layout. It was still depressing, but it bore the imprint of a different tenant.

Before shooting the first scenes in the apartment, Gray walked Furlong through it on a guided tour. Furlong is sixteen but could be twelve. He has a beautiful, vulnerable face, which for part of the shoot was covered with a purple bruise, painted on by the make-up department. Even without the make-up, his face looked bruised. He was as painfully taciturn as Gray was unstoppably loquacious.

The director pointed to a framed picture in the vestibule. "You know who that is?" he asked. "Paul Klee, a very great artist. Your father is a very bright man, but he's been humbled in this country."

"He's used to being pretty wealthy?" Furlong asked.

"Not wealthy, but one of the intelligentsia in Europe," Gray replied. "And now he's a broken man. You've grown up with someone who's ashamed that he's living like this. He's ashamed that you don't appreciate the art on the wall and you just listen to music on your Walkman. When he's living in shame, that means you can't respect him, and you turn inward. What I want you to get out of this apartment is, your mom's cancer is like a concrete manifestation of the sadness and the pain. It's almost as if the stench of death is oozing from the walls. That's why you don't want to come here. Does that make sense?"

"Yeah," Furlong said. "Yeah. That makes sense."

When Schell came to see the apartment, five days later, he had a lot more to say. The first thing he asked was

"Why is it called 'Reuben's apartment'? Why not 'Arkady's apartment'?" Thompson, the production designer, to whom Schell was speaking, soon realized that this was no idle question.

In his early sixties, his black hair graying and his middle thickening, Schell is a dilapidated but still recognizable edition of the handsome defense attorney he played in "Judgment at Nuremberg." His dark eyes have a gleam that lies somewhere between the mischievous and the demonic. His gaze beamed restlessly around the living room. "You know what I'm looking for?" he said. "Something very precious that he's kept all this time." He proposed that the cherished object be set in the center of the bookcase and illuminated, "like an altar." (A few days later, he found in a Greenwich Village antique shop the perfect item—an eighteenth-century Russian gilt-wood *objet* that was part of a pair retailing for thirteen thousand seven hundred dollars. The producers politely ignored him.) He visualized an upright piano, where he "was always teaching his sons Chopin or Beethoven," and an old Remington typewriter, "where he writes his memoir." For the sickroom of his wife, Irina, he suggested books by Lenin and Trotsky, because "she's a combatant, and I am a devout anti-Communist—that's the problem of our marriage."

None of this was in the script. As he talked, he was furnishing the spaces of his character as well as the rooms of the apartment.

WHEN Schell arrived for his first scene, which was in a Russian men's social club, he made a short speech to the crew. "Hello, everybody," he said. "My doctor gave me today a big box of Tylenol, which is for the crew, because you're working with me." The responding laughter sounded uncertain.

The next day, for the scene of Arkady's mother's eightieth-birthday party, Schell arrived on the set with a handwritten speech to replace the one in the script. "I'm thinking of you," he said to James Gray. "I think you really need to open it up." In the script, Arkady makes a simple seven-sentence salute to his mother. Schell had something else in mind. In his revamped version, he talked of how his mother had survived the two World Wars and Stalin's atrocities. He dropped the names of other Soviet emigrants, including Rostropovich and Chagall. He spoke about a "hearing apparatus" that he had obtained to rescue her from deafness. Finally, he read from Turgenev's story "First Love."

"We're dead," Kerry Orent, the co-producer, muttered on the sidelines.

Steve Apicella, the first assistant director, came over. "Somebody has to put their foot down with this guy," he said. "James has to do it. Otherwise, he'll walk all over us."

Gray was talking to Schell, editing down the speech to a more manageable length. The wars, Stalin, the hearing apparatus, and the famous emigrants were pencilled out. Turgenev remained.

Gray came up to Webster. "You may kill me," he said, "but I like that better than my speech."

After he left, Orent said, "Bear in mind, too, that we've never had any re-

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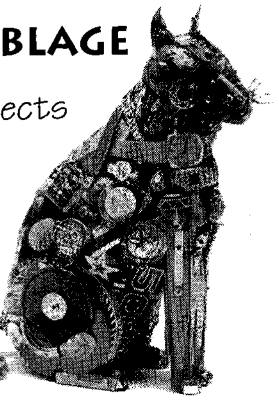

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hearsal time with Max, and we're paying for that now."

"That's right," Webster said.

"It will work fine as long as James is smart enough to keep him in line."

"James is smart," Webster said.

A director's great challenge—in the face of ticking time and swelling budgets—is to retain a sense of the original conception of the movie without a white-knuckled clampdown that forecloses serendipity. "We've got to be ready for these things to happen," Gray told Julie Oppenheimer, the harried script supervisor. "This is what gives the movie life. We could just shoot the script, and it will be a large White Castle hamburger."

The next week, at the apartment, the confrontation between Schell and Tim Roth, as Joshua, was filmed. Roth is an intense, controlled actor, with pale skin, a prominent nose, and a toothy grin. The scene called for Schell to shout at Roth in the narrow hallway, push him to the floor, and take off a belt to hit him. At that point, Roth was to punch him in the face.

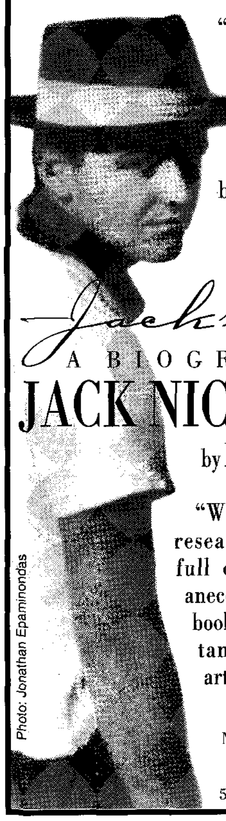
Roy Farfel, the stunt coördinator, was on hand to coach the actors and to put down mats for Schell's fall. It took six hours to light the room and rehearse the scene. The crew then broke for lunch. When everyone returned, the camera was ready to roll.

The second assistant cameraperson clapped the slate, and, instead of the choreographed sequence, pandemonium followed. As the crew watched in horrified disbelief, Schell hit Roth twice in the face with the belt and grappled with him, slamming him so hard against the wall that divided the hall from the living room that it shuddered. He shouted lines that were not in the script: "Get out! Murderer! Thief! You ruined my family!" He stumbled against the camera, jarring it on its dolly track.

Afterward, Tom Richmond, the director of photography, told Gray that he didn't know what he'd recorded.

"I'm not going to fret about it," Gray replied. "It's on film. It's genius. Let's move on."

Livid, Roth left the apartment. Schell went to the back bedroom. When he appeared in the living room, he said to Gray, "James, if you like, I apologize to the crew."



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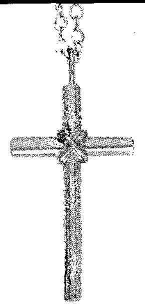

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"Just to Tim, when he comes," Gray whispered.

When Roth and Furlong reëntered, Schell stood up. "Quiet, please," he said. "Can I have the attention of the crew? I hope you understand the impulse of an actor who tries to improvise at the last moment. It was a sudden impulse when I just thought, Arkady has to explode. Tim took it greatly, so I would like some applause for him." There was a pause and then a few claps. Roth rolled his eyes. They reshot the scene as it had been rehearsed.

Later, Farfel, the stunt supervisor, sat down by Roth on the stairs outside the apartment.

"Sorry about that," he said.

"Not your fault," Roth replied. "Actor goes off the rails."

"That's why we rehearse, so nobody gets hurt. And then the actor goes nuts. Did he hit you with the belt?"

"Twice," Roth said, with a tight little smile.

Farfel shook his head and walked away.

DURING the shoot, the members of the crew spent virtually every weekday hour together, except for the few hours they got to sleep. They were like an élite battalion: the working conditions were horrific, yet they knew how many others would love to be in their place. Even Jason Hoffman, a twenty-one-year-old from Nashville, who was paid a hundred and twenty-five dollars for a seventeen-to-nineteen-hour day manning a table of cut-up fruit, cold cuts, and Entenmann's cakes, considered himself lucky. "This is pretty much the bottom job, craft services, but, hopefully, I'll get to do other things," he said. "Though I hate this, I like being around these guys." He learned that Steve Apicella, the first assistant director, liked peanut butter and jelly on wheat bread, and he made it his business to supply it. "The makeup department all want natural food—granola bars and hummus," he said. "All the grips want is doughnuts and Cokes and Entenmann's." One night, he realized that he controlled the mood of the room like a d.j. in a dance hall. "If I want to dice 'em up, I can drug 'em with sugar and candy," he said. "Then, if they're coming down at night, I give 'em soup and they're slugging."

Sometimes I imagined that the grips,

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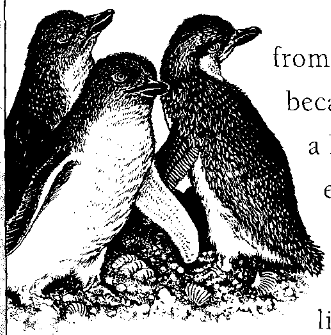

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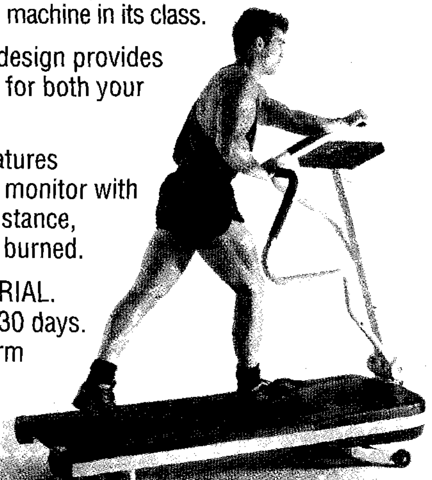

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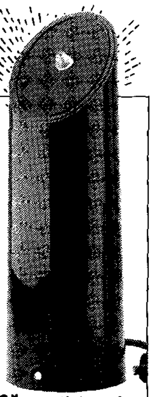

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gaffers, actors, producers, and all the rest of them were particles inside a one-cell organism, like a paramecium; when I thought of it that way, it was obvious that two of the particles were shielded in a vesicle of their own. Although Jackie Domac, at twenty-nine, is thirteen years older than Edward Furlong, from afar they resemble high-school sweethearts. After every take, Furlong would come up to hug or kiss her. Domac, who is five-one, had originally met Furlong when she was hired as his stand-in on the set of "Terminator 2." (He has since slightly outgrown her.) Bored working as a substitute teacher in Los Angeles, Domac had applied to be an extra, and had been called almost immediately. She got along well with Furlong. When his guardians asked if she would like to work as his teacher, she went back to college (she had already graduated from Berkeley) to get the necessary postgraduate credits. She taught Furlong for one year, and then, last summer, was employed as a social worker, monitoring his welfare on the Canadian set of the forthcoming film "Brainscan." Over the summer, Furlong turned sixteen, and, Domac says, they fell in love. She is no longer his teacher or his social worker. They share a house in Los Angeles, and she is in the process of getting a divorce from her husband, who is an anesthesiologist. I asked her if the age gap was a problem for her and Furlong. "Our interests sometimes differ, like our taste in music or our free time," she said, in an adenoidal voice very much like Furlong's. "In our free time I might go out to our garden and he plays Metallica. The only time it comes to my attention is if I'm under critical attack." No one on the set appeared to give the relationship a second thought. Domac looked after Furlong and kept him happy. She was good for the movie.

People often say that a movie crew is like a family. Producers prefer it that way—again, for the good of the movie. On "Little Odessa," sixty people were working hard to manufacture illusions—a shooting at a phone booth, a party in a Russian restaurant. The family feeling was one of those illusions. "You create a microcosm," Paul Webster told me. "When it's all over, it can be very depressing. And then you see the same people a few months later and you have nothing

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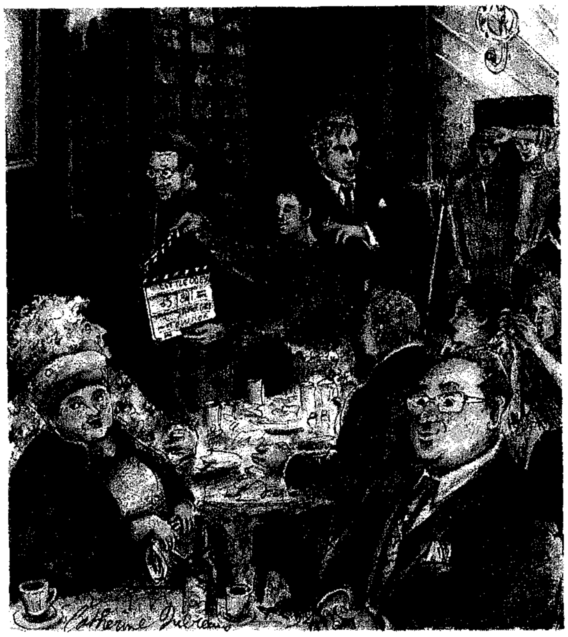
in common with them. It's very weird."

Late on a Friday night three weeks into the shoot, Chance Helburn, a twenty-six-year-old production assistant, died, of an overdose of cocaine and heroin. He had been through a drug-rehab program. (It was said at his funeral that he had been clean for two years.) His fiancée notified a crew member on Sunday, and on Monday morning word trickled through the group. No announcement was made. Eddy Collyns, the location manager, said that he and Dave Cox, the second assistant director, intended to have a moment of silence at lunch on Monday, but the press of work intervened. Instead, Margot Kingon, of the electric crew, bought a candle at a nearby bodega. It burned at the back of the craft-services table.



Schell arrived on the set with a handwritten speech.

VANESSA REDGRAVE arrived on the set near the end of the production schedule. She was very polite to everyone but made no attempt to be part of the family. She indulged in no speculation about her character's off-the-script life. Her first day on the set, she was fitted for a bald cap. The process takes two and a half hours: hair is slicked down, a clear plastic cap is put in place, its edges are cut with a brush and acetone, and then makeup is applied.

"Should you look especially gaunt?" the makeup artist asked.

"Ask James, but I shouldn't think so," Redgrave replied.

"The other question we had is how do you envision the hair? Short? Stippled? Totally bald? In strips?"

"I haven't got anything in mind."

Once the makeup job was completed, Gray came over to meet Redgrave and to examine her head. He didn't want her completely bald. He wanted her to have patches of hair. "I'm drawing on personal experience with this sort of thing," he said. "At the end, you don't get treatment and the hair starts to grow on top."

Although Redgrave complimented the work of all the makeup artists with charming courtesy, she made it clear the next day, when filming of her scenes began, that she didn't want to wear a bald cap. "Vanessa thought, no matter how good her performance, with the bald cap the first thing an audience would think was that this was an actor playing a sick woman," Karen Nichols, the makeup-and-hair artist, said to me. Redgrave never told Tom Paul, the sound mixer, why she didn't want him rearranging her clothing so that her chain necklace wouldn't clank against her mike. It was clear, though, that the mechanical appurtenances of filmmaking wearied and distracted her. In the first of the scenes that I watched her perform, she lay on her bed sleeping as her son Joshua came and hugged her. Her hair had been thinned with scissors and simply matted with cream. She wore a pink velours housedress. She lay on her side, her body racked by stertorous breaths, her hands twitching slightly, her eyes occasionally opening in an unseeing milky-blue gaze. She did it again and again, take after take. Everyone watching was mesmerized. She was a master of old-fashioned theatrical illusion.

She agreed to shoot a half day in addition to her scheduled two, but told the producers that she would have to be in her car at 1 P.M. The last scene shot was her death, in which, according to the script, Irina "coughs up a dark-brown fluid." Dave Doernberg had experimented with sesame sauce, butterscotch pudding, apple-and-plum baby food, and roasted cashew butter. What Gray

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approved was sesame sauce, darkened and thinned with soy sauce. With a handheld camera, Richmond followed Furlong down the hallway to the door of Redgrave's bedroom, then to the kitchen. At that moment, Apicella, the first assistant director, handed Redgrave a paper cup of the sauce. She put a little in her mouth, handed back the cup, went into the kitchen, and died. Because the hallway was very narrow, the cameraman kept bumping against the walls, making reshoots necessary. Finally, Richmond got the needed footage. Redgrave said a few gracious words, and Apicella said a few in response. Prashant Gupta, the stills photographer, begged her to remain a few moments. The set had been too small for him to snap his usual shots, and a photo of Redgrave dying might well be requested by a newspaper or magazine when the movie was released. Tom Paul also asked for one more minute. He wanted her to repeat her lines, so if the clanking proved too loud the sound could be fixed. Redgrave complied, but very hastily. "I'm fifteen minutes *late*," she said. "People are *waiting* for me." In two more minutes, she was gone.

NEAR the end of the shoot, while I was having lunch with the producers and assistant directors, I was amazed to hear someone declare that, of all the actors, Schell had been the most coöperative. Before I could say anything, someone else said what I was thinking, but in a completely different tone of voice from what I would have used. "Max was unbelievable in the fight," he said. "Then he made that speech and ate crow."

It dawned on me. "You mean James told Max to let loose?"

"James saw the scene wasn't working," Kerry Orent said. "It was too tame. He took a gamble and it worked. The scene looks fantastic in the dailies."

It was, as Schell had said, an impulse, but not an actor's impulse. Without telling anyone, Gray had authorized Schell to depart from the rehearsed blocking and tackle Roth. "If Tim finds out, he'll never speak to James again," Paul Webster said.

I rolled back the scene in my mind and felt that familiar thrill you get from a good movie. All the hard work had paid off. I could no longer distinguish between reality and illusion. ♦

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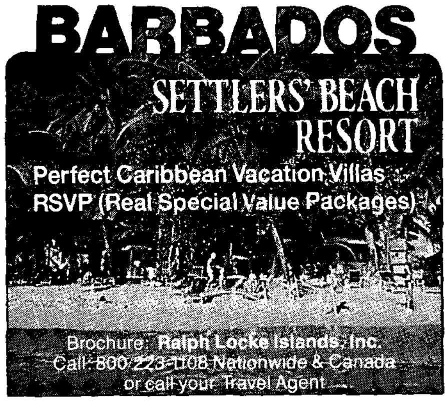
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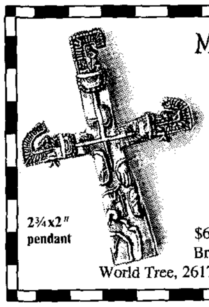
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ELEMENTS OF FILM

WHERE THERE'S FIRE

Before film-sex became sex on film, nothing lit up the screen quite like a smoking cigarette.

BY ANTHONY LANE

"ANYBODY got a match?" The voice is low and unhurried, but it silences the men in the room. One of them looks up, looks some more, then throws a box of matches. The woman catches it with a downward swat of the hand, like a cat getting bored with a mouse. She strikes a match, puts it to a cigarette, flips it over her shoulder, says "Thanks" without meaning it, tosses back the box, and leaves. Nothing else: no music, no idle chatter, just the camera drawing nearer to her with each shot. In one short scene, cinema has been restored to its essentials, and suddenly it looks so easy: she lights up, and so does the screen.

Lauren Bacall: semiotic sizzler.

JULIAN ALLEN

Lauren Bacall's entrance into "To Have and Have Not" remains, in every sense, a matchless moment. She asked for a light, making the request sound like an order, and Bogart—not just any old lunk but *Bogart*—was happy to obey. Burning desire, smoldering passion, hearts aflame: it's hard to believe now, but there was a time when an audience could be hooked on such promises, and when a cigarette was the neatest symbol of their fulfillment. Smoking was wordless, intimate, and universal, a bond between the starlet and the G.I., wrapped in its own modern etiquette but also nicely primitive. What Bacall was really saying was: Come on, baby, light my fire. She and Bogart teamed up over tobacco, and stayed that way; as the opening credits roll on "The Big Sleep," we see the two of them smoking in misty silhouette, then putting the cigarettes down in an ashtray, where they can nestle side by side and share some heat.

In "Casablanca," on the other hand, we see Bogart's cigarette before we see the man himself, and it soon joins his tuxedo as a key item in the loner's outfit; Rick toasts and kisses Ilsa for all he's worth, but not once does he invite her to smoke—a sure sign that they will eventually split up. He prefers the company of Louis, half-man, half Gauloise, and wanders off with him into a suitably dense fog. Bogart is the greatest smoker in cinema, because he saw, through the haze, everything that a cigarette could mean: togetherness or solitude, tough talk or banter, evening elegance or a hoary, hacking dawn. He was lucky, too, to be working in the Hollywood of the nineteen-forties, when black-and-white photography reached its lushest depths; smoking is the one truly monochrome human activity, a white tube puffing a white cloud, and it was a perfect fit—more than that, a physical aid—for the gauzy, dreamed-about look of a studio shoot. Film noir is never black right through; it is dotted with gusts of film blanc, as cops and lovers light up, just as its cruelty is punctuated by moments of tenderness and wit. No wonder the French loved it so, this ambiguous world of ifs and butts; and when Belmondo, a hat on his head and a cigarette stuck to his lip, says "Bogie" in the middle of "Breathless," he is not just paying homage to his hero but cementing international relations.

Richard Klein, in his lively, obsessive

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new book, "Cigarettes Are Sublime," quotes the motto of a nineteenth-century French journal: "*Qui fume prie*"—"Who Smokes, Prays." Nothing has changed, and France is still hard at prayer; non-smoking sections were introduced in bars and restaurants in 1992, but nobody took any notice, and thus far not a single complaint has been filed. There is even a pair of Alain Resnais films called "Smoking" and "No Smoking" now running in Paris; the first, naturally, is doing better business than the second, and it will be interesting to see whether the situation is reversed when they open here, this summer. At the beginning of "Smoking," the heroine, Celia, turns around and looks at a packet of Players on her garden table. The camera tracks closer, too, and stares, and the soundtrack thuds like a heartbeat; it's a wonderful, suspended instant of temptation, and you are not surprised when Celia gives in and lights up. In "No Smoking," the same thing happens, but this time she says no; the film continues on its way, using most of the characters from "Smoking" but soon peeling off in a completely different direction.

Resnais is onto something here: the dramatic shorthand of the cigarette—its status not just as a prop but as a crux of the action. Celia's love life, even her sanity, seems to hinge on the fateful question of whether or not to light up—an action that in itself is of no consequence at all. For a nice, trashy variation on this, see the moment in "The Spy Who Loved Me" when Barbara Bach, entwined with Roger Moore, takes out a cigarette. You don't really notice until she puffs it in his face like a blow dart; it's a trick one, loaded with some dusty narcotic, and it sends Bond straight to sleep, although with Roger Moore you can hardly tell. In "Now Voyager," the magic takes even longer to wear off. If Bette Davis had already had a quick drag in her cabin before venturing out for a cocktail, then the plot would have been over before it began, and Paul Henreid would never have got to practice his party trick: two smokes in the mouth—one for you, one for me. It's the most notorious romantic gesture in cinema and, as such, it teeters on the brink of absurdity; I always wonder what would have happened if Bette had brought along a gaggle of girlfriends, and poor Paul, ever the gentleman, had

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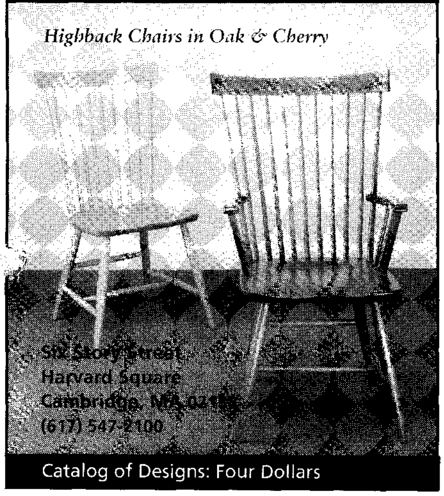

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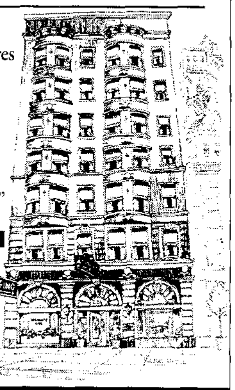

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tried to light one for all of them, standing there gagging and spluttering, his mouth packed like a rocket launcher.

If "Now Voyager" is hard to watch these days, it is largely because this exchange of nicotine, however delicately done, is such an obvious and painful substitute for sex. Both the aura of the narrative and the temper of the times forbade the unhappy couple to do what they really wanted to do, which was to clamber into a lifeboat and start chewing each other's tongues, and so they were forced into this elaborate mouth-to-mouth asphyxiation. Recent cinema has no need of this endearing repression; characters smoke not instead of sex but after it, and you can't help noticing that the most convincing smokers appear in films with an old-fashioned, slightly clubland flavor—Jeff Bridges in "The Fabulous Baker Boys," ruefully clouding over at the piano, or the poised Hanna Schygulla in "The Marriage of Maria Braun." If, now and then, lovers still pledge their devotion over a cigarette, it feels like an optional extra, a dippy private joke. When the Japanese girl in Jim Jarmusch's "Mystery Train" flicks a Zippo with her toes, then clenches it in one foot to offer her boyfriend a light, the two of them don't look stifled, the way Bette and Paul do; they look like teen-age sweethearts—a funky twist on an old icon. If anything is going to doom these folks, it is not so much the nature of passion as the density of tar.

In the current climate, it takes a brave director to suggest that smoking is acceptable, and an outright heretic to credit it with beauty. It takes someone like John Carpenter, whose work is suffused with the grace and economy—and the social values—of an earlier age. In "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" he showed a cigarette held and lit in mid-air, and the smoke pulled down into unseen lungs, outlining for a second their delicate, branching fretwork. It was a vision to die for, and that was the problem. Smoking has risen swiftly up through the ranks of immorality, from an unclean habit to an outright sin, one of the many that we clutch at in a secular age. These days, it implies not self-possession but loss of control; not a confident smile but smarting eyes and a cough like an outboard motor; not a better life but the worst possible death. Bogart himself succumbed to cancer of

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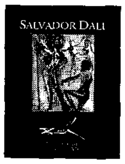

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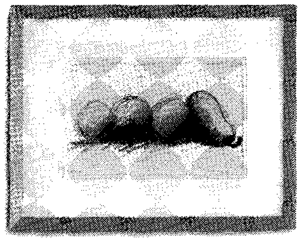

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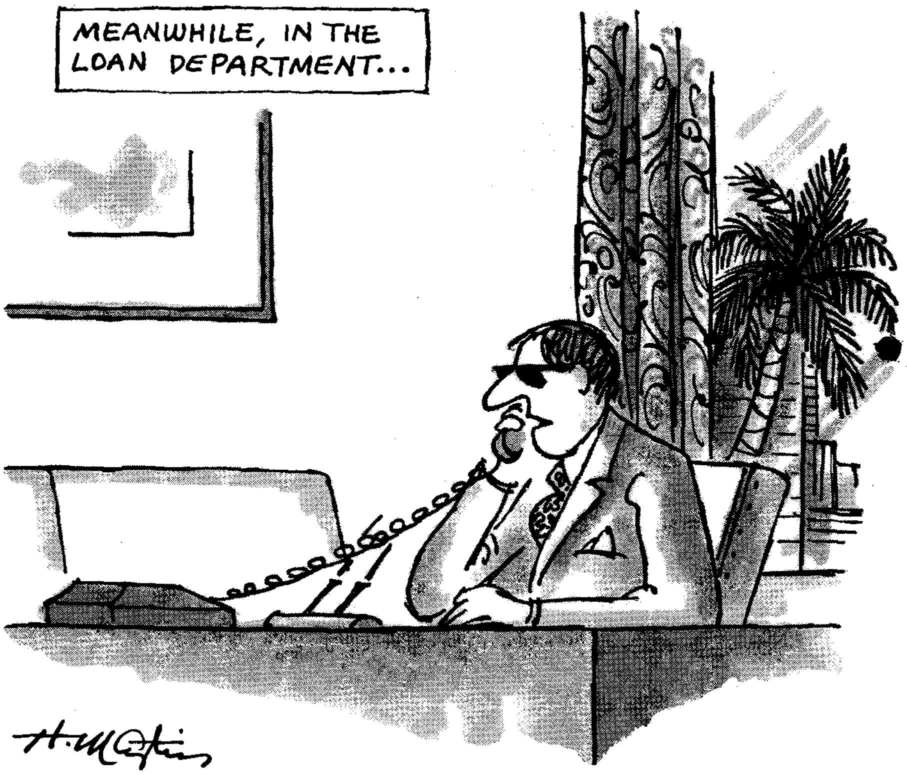
MEANWHILE, IN THE LOAN DEPARTMENT...

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• •

the esophagus. He paid the price, in other words, for being Bogart; his movies may tell us that it was worth it, but his suffering suggests otherwise, and that is what our culture wants to hear. It used to be argued that if smoking is a crime it is one that we commit against ourselves, a Rick-like gesture of free will; now the rise of the latest demon, passive smoking, has turned the act of lighting a cigarette into one of assault. Smoking is already forbidden in most movie theatres—the image leaps directly from projector to screen, no longer swinging like a searchlight through spirals of blue-gray—and it could one day disappear from the movies themselves. But nothing kills art like a sense of responsibility—especially an art that finds such beauty in corruption. Who wants to watch breathable and blameless films? And what would the actors do with their hands all the time? Woody Allen, in "Manhattan," put his finger on the problem: "I don't inhale, because it gives you cancer. But I look so incredibly handsome with a cigarette that I can't not hold one."

And so it lingers on, that despised image of cool, that whisper of liberation and repose, that pipe dream, and it won't go away. Think of your favorite cigarettes: Dietrich in disguise in "Blonde Venus," blowing a lick of smoke to fill the gap between her hat-brim and the curve of her fan, throwing one more veil over her identity; Martin Sheen in "Apocalypse Now," inhaling with intensity as the boat bears him upriver toward his fate, a scene so compelling that it actually caused a friend of mine to *take up* smoking; or, best of all, Napoleon Wilson, the hard man of John Carpenter's "Assault on Precinct 13." His first line in the movie is "Got a smoke?," and it marks him as a direct descendant of Lauren Bacall. By the end, he has his wish: there is smoke all around him—the hangover of a gun battle and a gas explosion—and yet he still asks, "Anybody got a smoke?" You laugh at the nerve of these people, their composure proved rather than dented by the need for a cigarette. As Richard Klein argues, it is not despite the perils of tobacco but precisely because of them that smokers do what they do. The more thunderous the warning, the higher the thrill. Smoking is a short-lived, incandescent pleasure that thrives on attitude and risk, and leaves you wanting more. Pretty much like the movies. ♦

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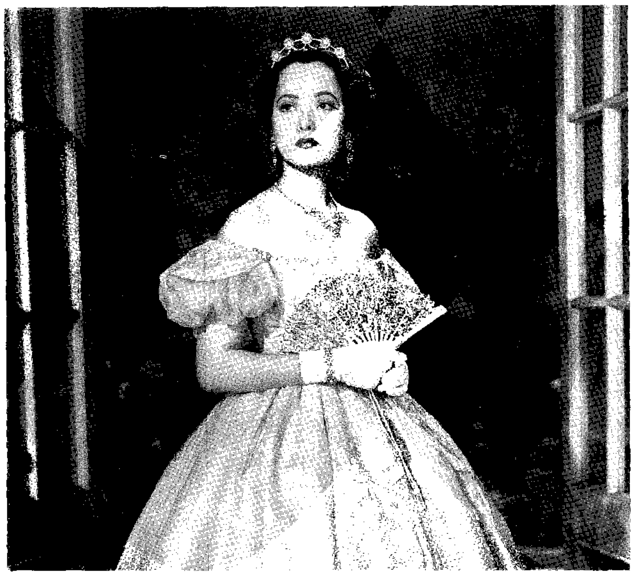

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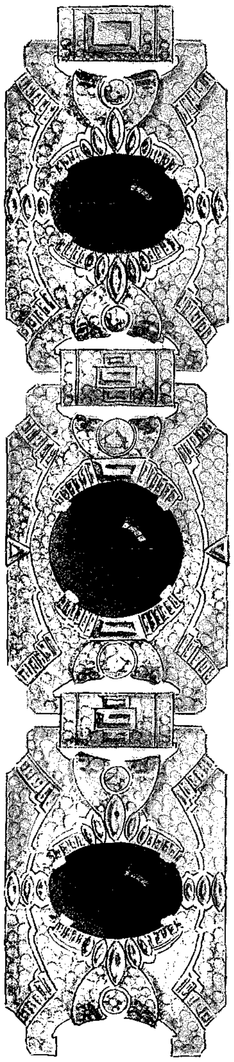

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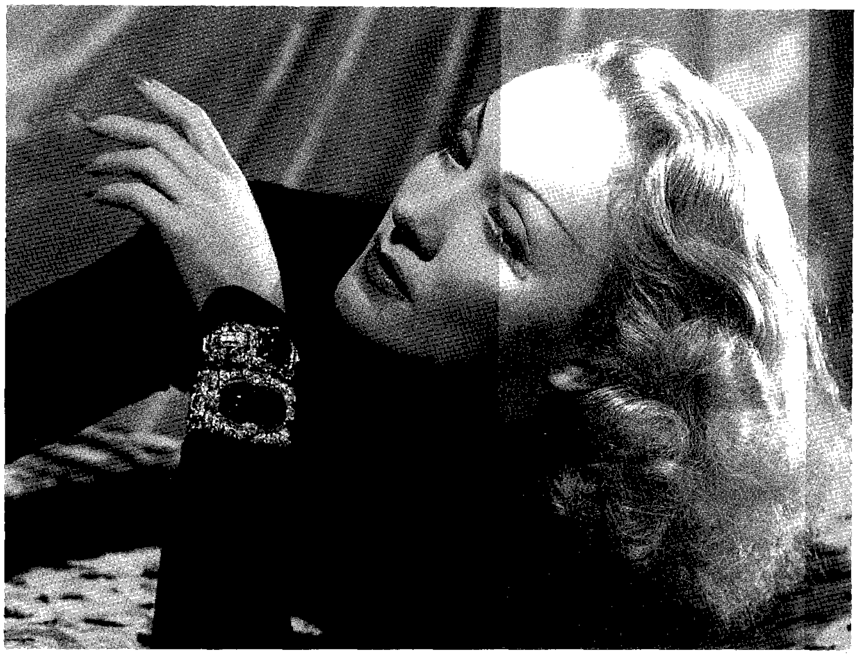
The sheer beauty of fine gems, the intimate quality of jeweled gifts, and their essential and mythic value all combine to make jewelry a most prized possession. Hollywood's great leading ladies—and men—sport it in movies, flaunt it just about everywhere, and even confess to the press their true affection for their precious accessories.

Filmmakers past and present have utilized exquisite bejeweled creations as powerful props that reveal pertinent clues about characters' love lives, life-styles, and secrets from their pasts, as passports to romantic good fortune, and, on some sinister cinematic occasions, as tip-offs to help unravel plots of murder and mayhem.



Photograph by Kobal Collection/Marlene Dietrich Estate

Top: *Marlene Dietrich wears two of her emerald and diamond cabochons in this publicity still.*
Lower right: *One of her bracelets, along with a ruby and diamond ring, recently sold at Christie's for $99,000.*

The Silent Movie Era

The style of jewelry an actor wore in the early years of movies had a purpose beyond mere decoration, because success depended on typecasting and costume. "America's Sweetheart," Mary Pickford, went all the way to Paris to find jewelry that matched her corkscrew curls, demure dresses, and wide-brimmed hats. Her adornment of choice was a delicate sautoir, a necklace of seed pearls with diamond-capped tassels.

In contrast, Gloria Swanson, the glittering queen of early Cecil B. De Mille films, sailed through movies in the most elaborate jewelry and costumes of any silent star. To ensure that her not-so-private life had the same dazzle, Swanson spent a fortune on jewelry, renting it at ten per cent cost. In 1924 alone, she ran up a bill of half a million dollars, mainly on pearls—the quintessential Jazz Age accessory.

The style of jewelry an actor wore in the early years of movies had a purpose beyond mere decoration, because success depended on typecasting and costume.

As the premier on-screen lover, Rudolph Valentino held undisputed sway over men's jewelry fashions. After the release of "The Sheik" (1921), the type of slave bracelet Valentino wore became a best-seller. In the sequel, "The Son of the Sheik" (1926), he played a desert chieftain with a love of both Eastern and Western accessories—a revolver, antique belt, knife, and sword, as well as a cigarette case, patented lighter, and sapphire ring. The style of watch featured in the film became exceedingly popular because it was seen on the wrist of the sultry star.

The Talkies

When Hollywood switched over to sound, the shrill, shrieky voices of many silent-film performers were not the only problems the studio faced. Pearl gowns and bead fringes thundered in the early recording devices. It appeared that rubber jewels would have to be the accessories of the future. But Le Marie, costumer for the Marx Brothers' film "The Cocoanuts" (1929) was more optimistic. He told *Photoplay* that the talkies would bring new precious jewelry, "wide bands of gold and silver, beautifully engraved or studded with brilliants, made to fit the arm perfectly, and tight-fitting necklaces of the same type."

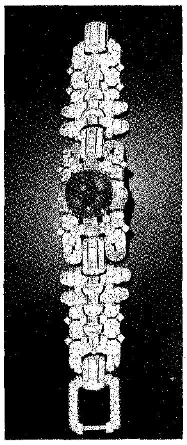
With better sound equipment, the uproar over jewelry and costumes ended.

During the Depression people flocked to movies that played to their longing for luxury. Time and time again the plots portrayed a working girl of extraordinary charm and beauty who was swept off her feet by a rich man. Shop girl, showgirl, or call girl, she quickly adjusted to a life of beautiful clothes and jewelry.

A better-than-average rags-to-riches saga, "Possessed" (1931) starred Joan Crawford as a paper-box-factory girl. She falls in love with a millionaire lawyer, played by Clark Gable, who gives her a new jewel every year. Her first anniversary gift is girandole earrings. Resembling upside-down chandeliers, the jewel originated in the Baroque period and was modified with geometrical elements for the Art Deco age. Her second anniversary gift is a big diamond ring, and the third a string of pearls. Unlike faceted stones, these aquatic treasures cannot be cut to delete flaws, change size, or improve color, and women waited years for a perfectly matched and graduated natural-pearl necklace. In the movie, as Crawford lifts her strand, she muses to Gable, "I seem to grow more valuable to you each year."

All that Glitters

Movie stars—and their jewels—were never more fascinating than in the mid-thirties. Their glittering regalia consisted of huge cabochon gems set in Machine Style diamond jewelry. Marlene Dietrich wore her emerald cabochon suite—made up of a 128.45-carat bracelet, a second 37.45-carat bracelet, and a 94.50-carat pendant brooch—all around town and in her movies "Desire" (1936) and "Angel" (1937). Joan Crawford's star sapphires, dubbed "Joan Blue" by the press, included an 80-carat pendant, a 70-carat ring, and a wide, fancy-cut diamond bracelet punctuated with star sapphires of 73.15, 63.61, and 57.65 carats.



Courtesy Christie's New York

Merle Oberon, wife of director Alexander Korda, was as famous for her impressive jewelry as for her films. The British actress arrived in Hollywood with a collection that included a dazzling necklace of diamond rondelles and twenty-nine unfaceted rock-size emeralds. When

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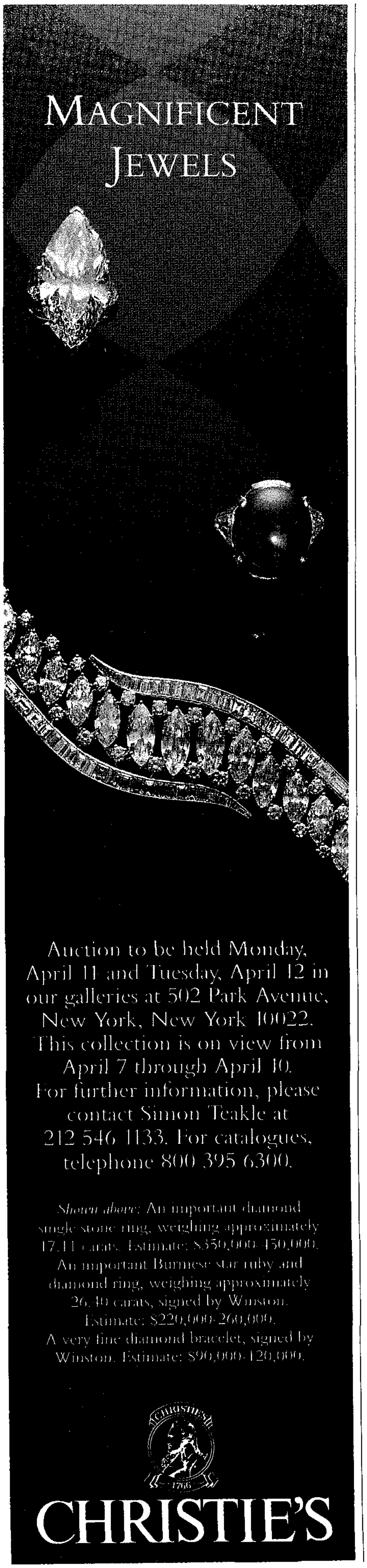

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Shown above: An important diamond single stone ring, weighing approximately 17.11 carats. Estimate: $350,000-450,000. An important Burmese star ruby and diamond ring, weighing approximately 26.40 carats, signed by Winston. Estimate: $220,000-260,000. A very fine diamond bracelet, signed by Winston. Estimate: $90,000-120,000.

CHRISTIE'S

Worldview Entertainment/Killiam Collection

Top: *Valentino wore his signature Cartier tank watch in "The Son of the Sheik";* Lower right: *The watch in the foreground features a cabochon sapphire wind-stem.*

asked by a reporter if the necklace was designed by couturier Elsa Schiaparelli, she replied, "No, but she almost got it! I saw it in a Paris shop, and I went back a second time to look at it. The salesman said someone else was interested, but I only half believed him. The next time I went in, the necklace was not in the case. My mysterious rival had been looking at it in one of the private rooms. Still I hesitated because the design was so exotic—so unlike the classic settings of precious stones. The next day I walked right by the shop, not intending to be tempted again, but Madame Schiaparelli was just coming out. Instantly, I knew why she had been there, and assumed she had the necklace right in her handbag. I must have looked my disappointment when I got back to the hotel, because Mr. Korda, in his direct way, put on his hat and went out. He walked across to the shop; the necklace was still there, and he bought it."

Wartime

In the thirties, Mae West quipped that goodness had nothing to do with her platinum-and-diamond jewelry. But she represented well the spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice during World War II when she sold her collection to benefit the Royal Air Force. Her deed underlined the importance of platinum as a strategic metal.

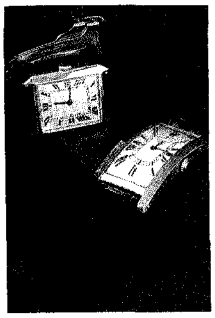
The use of platinum for nonmilitary purposes was tightly regulated, making white and yellow gold the primary metal for precious jewels. The gold style of this era, later named Retro, featured broad metal surfaces with gem accents and industrial parts, such as stovepipe chains and brickwork straps.

Needless to say, the selflessness of wartime affected the use of jewelry in Hollywood productions. For "Lifeboat" (1944), director Alfred Hitchcock used Tallulah Bankhead's luxury items to sustain the tension within the confines of the single-set production and as means of survival. Her mink coat warms the shell-shocked woman who lost her child; the flame from her gold lighter sterilizes the knife used to amputate a seaman's leg, and her pocket flask of whiskey provides a primitive anesthetic for him. Near the end of the film the only object left to save the starving castaways is Bankhead's diamond bracelet. A gift from her first husband, it was her passport out of the south side of Chicago to the Gold Coast, and functioned as her good-luck charm for fifteen years. She removes the bracelet from her wrist and offers it as a lure for fishing, commenting wryly, "I can recommend the bait. I ought to know. I bit on it myself."

Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend

In the postwar period, diamonds, the world's most popular gem, were pavé-set in three-dimensional sculptural pieces, worn as studs and pendants and mounted in necklaces and bracelets. The monochromatic jewelry glittered on actresses in film noir, dark tales of passion, and Technicolor extravaganzas.

As the doomed heroine in the film noir "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948), Barbara Stanwyck showcases sumptuous diamond jewelry. She accessorizes a negligee with a diamond suite—an iris brooch, bracelet, ribbon earrings, and rings. With a wedding dress, Stanwyck wore her diamond jewelry—a sculptural gardenia brooch suspended from a diamond choker, with matching earrings. A discerning collector, the actress used her personal jewelry in movies and often had approval of any additional jewelry to be used.



Photograph by David Behl from "Hollywood Jewels" (Abrams)

Marilyn Monroe sang her credo, "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" in the Technicolor film "Gentlemen Prefer

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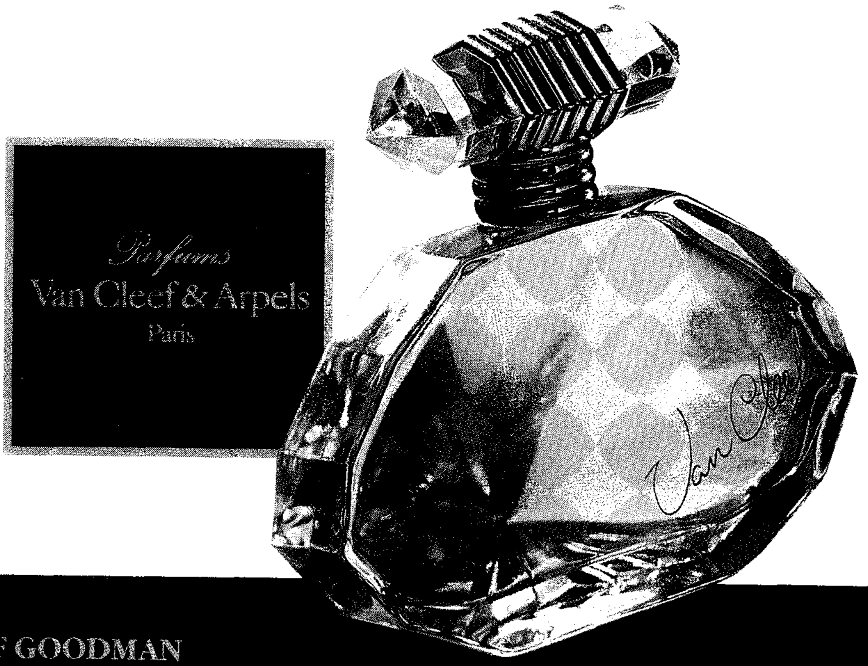
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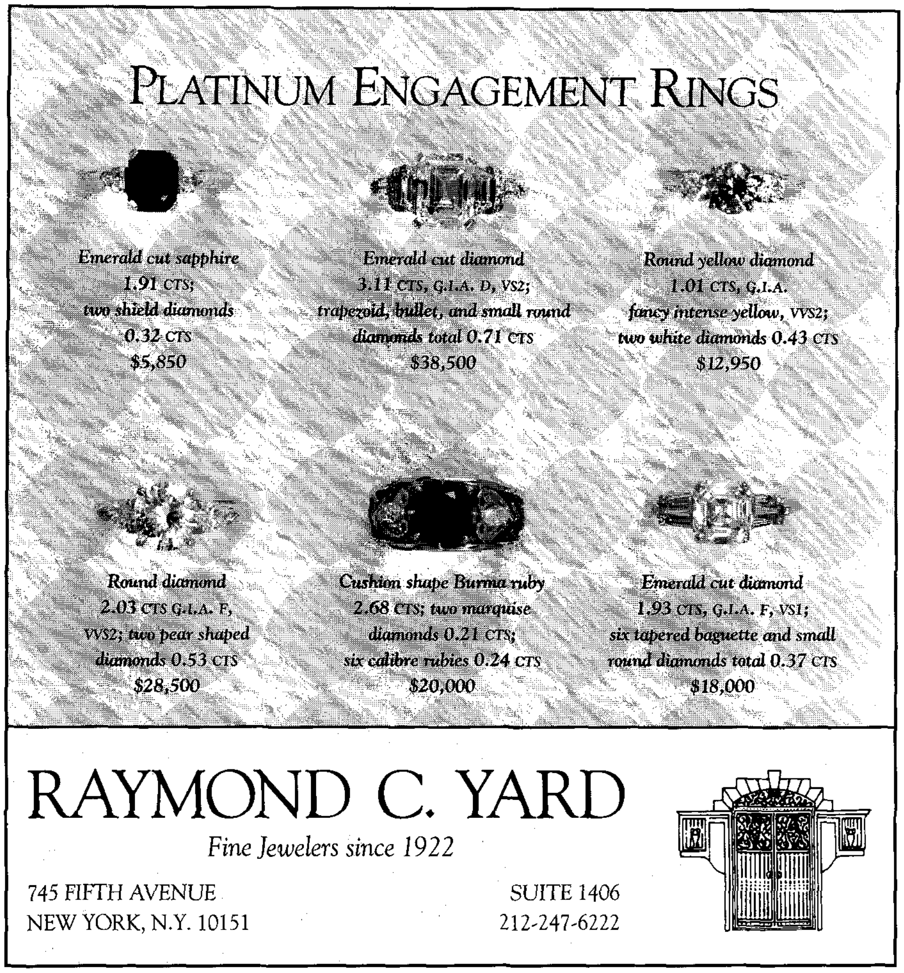
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two white diamonds 0.43 CTS
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Round diamond
2.03 CTS G.I.A. F,
VVS2; *two pear shaped diamonds* 0.53 CTS
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Cushion shape Burma ruby
2.68 CTS; *two marquise diamonds* 0.21 CTS;
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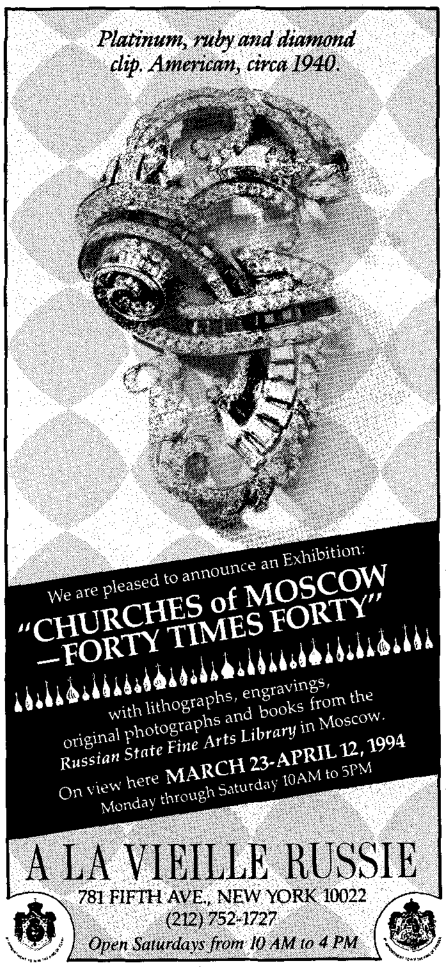
Platinum, ruby and diamond clip. American, circa 1940.

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It is with great pride that The Samuel Goldwyn Company sponsors this supplement celebrating "Hollywood Jewels."

Blondes" (1953). As a bubbly showgirl, Monroe's character snares a married man whom she thinks is a diamond magnate. Envisioning his plump face as a large faceted stone, she dreams of his potential as a supplier of jewelry, and makes him give her his wife's diamond tiara.

> *When Irving Thalberg proposed to Norma Shearer, she chose a large Marquise-cut diamond. The ring was featured in "The Divorcee."*

The royal wedding of Princess Elizabeth in 1947 and her coronation in 1953 popularized tiaras for commoners and nobility alike. Monroe parodies the style in the movie when she tries to fit a tiara around her neck; after being corrected, she admits that she loves finding new places to wear diamonds.

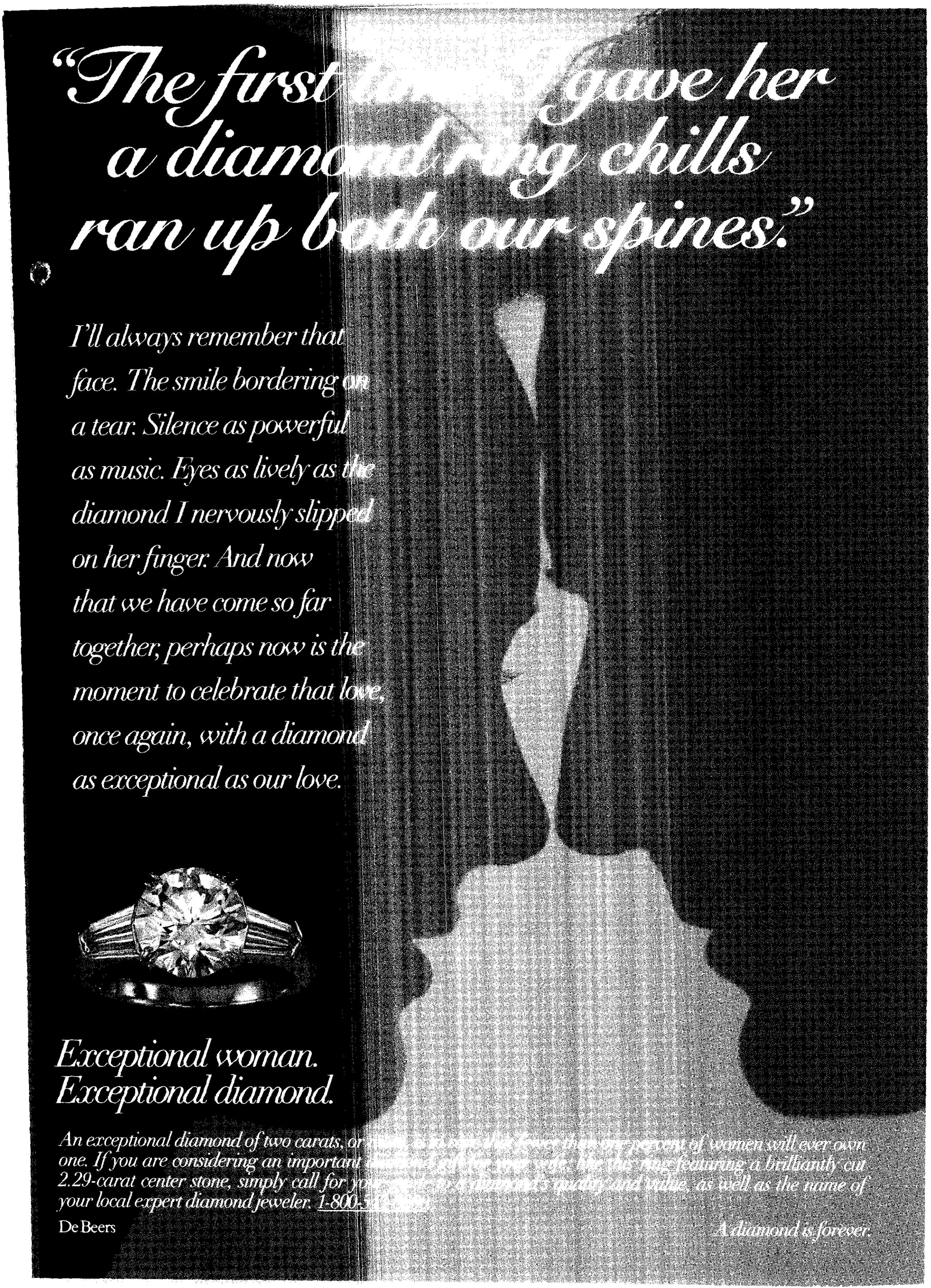
The Marrying Kind

From divas to Madonnas, all actresses flaunt their engagement rings—those tangible assets of love. When the "Boy Wonder" production chief of MGM, Irving Thalberg, proposed to Norma Shearer, in 1927, he brought out of his desk drawer an almost blinding selection of engagement rings. Shearer chose a large marquise-cut diamond ring that was prominently featured in "The Divorcee" (1930), and which appeared in one scene in "The Women" (1939). Mickey Rooney's wartime bride, Ava Gardner, had a 6.35-carat diamond surrounded by eight circular diamonds. Prince Rainier gave Grace Kelly a 12-carat emerald-cut diamond engagement ring that she wore in "High Society" (1956).

Grace Kelly wears her wedding present commissioned by Prince Rainier from Van Cleef & Arpels.

Photograph from "Van Cleef & Arpels" by Sylvie Raulet, published by Rizzoli, New York

Keeping that tradition alive, Winona Ryder wore her large diamond engagement ring from Johnny Depp in a *Vogue* costume spread promoting "Dracula" (1992). Other grand diamond engagement rings belong to Demi Moore, Whitney Houston, and Iman, who has a canary diamond.



"The first time I gave her a diamond ring chills ran up both our spines."

I'll always remember that face. The smile bordering on a tear. Silence as powerful as music. Eyes as lively as the diamond I nervously slipped on her finger. And now that we have come so far together, perhaps now is the moment to celebrate that love, once again, with a diamond as exceptional as our love.

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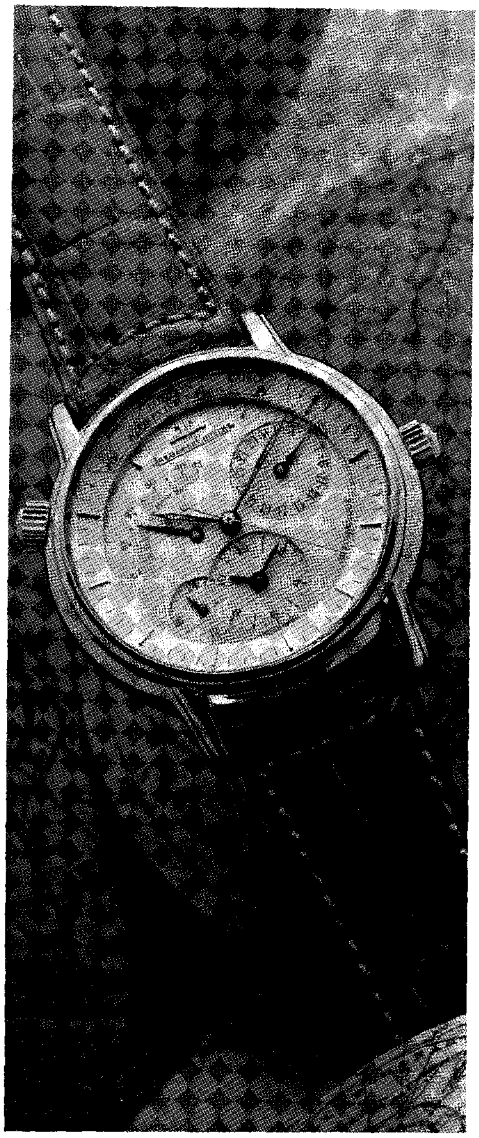

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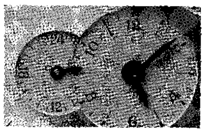

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Candice Bergen was given a unique triple band—with three square-cut diamonds set upside down—by her husband, director Louis Malle. Annette Bening wears an understated antique diamond engagement ring, and Kirstie Alley has an engagement ring with the classic baguette diamond ballerina mount and a sapphire center stone.

Hollywood Today

Though the studio system is gone, the trends and cycles of the movies, the stars, and their jewelry continue to work their magic. Filmmakers utilize jewelry as deftly as ever to give a visual description of character. In "Alice" (1990), Mia Farrow is a socialite whose long and short pearl necklaces and pearl studs reveal her conservatism. Sleek gold jewelry, just right for an executive assistant to top studio brass, distinguishes Dina Merrill in "The Player" (1992). When Julia Roberts wears a heart-shaped ruby and diamond choker, she dazzles Richard Gere in the updated rags-to-riches drama "Pretty Woman" (1990), which uses jewelry as a metaphor for beauty.

Madonna showed up at an Academy Award reception dripping in diamonds.

© Pierre-Gilles Vidoli

Center stage for formal contemporary jewelry is the annual Academy Awards ceremony, where every actress is dripping in gems and the entire world is watching. In 1991, Madonna wore a 34.25-carat emerald-cut pink-diamond ring, four wide diamond bracelets, and a 100-carat diamond necklace. Sharon Stone's globe-trotting shopping sprees make anything she wears newsworthy; her first choice for the 1992 Oscars was a pink- and canary-diamond flower suite. At the same ceremony, Elizabeth Taylor wore a canary- and white-diamond daisy necklace with chrysoprase leaves when she received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for her charity works to battle AIDS. The necklace is a rich modern addition to the most exceptional jewelry collection of any Hollywood star.

Penny Proddow and Marion Fasel are the authors of "Hollywood Jewels" (Abrams) and the curators of that exhibition at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

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ANNALS OF SHOWTOWN

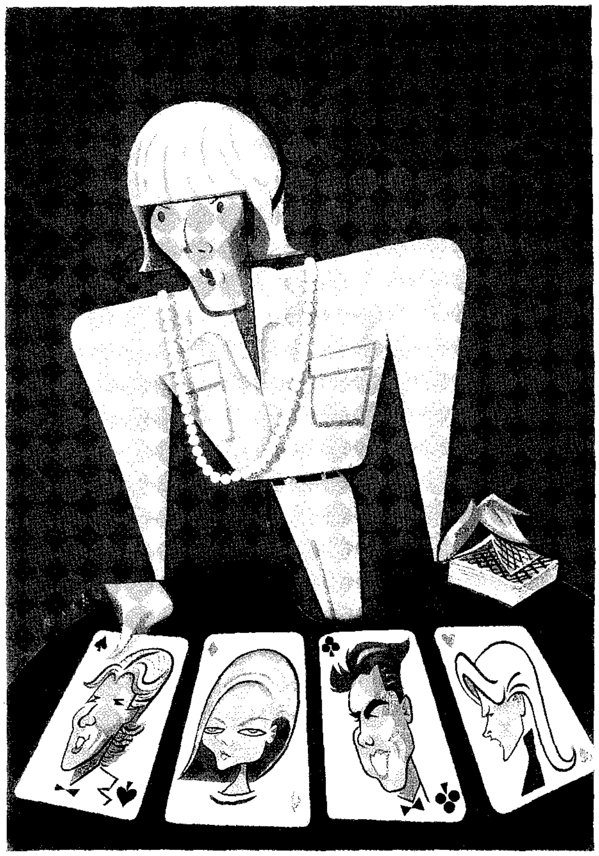
KINGSLEY'S RANSOM

There's been a shift in the way the stars and the press deal with each other, and it's because publicists like Pat Kingsley now hold the cards.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

THE publicist Pat Kingsley is tall and angular, with a nice face—the sort of face that children like. She is sixty-one, but she looks younger. Her hair is blond with a few streaks of gray in it, and she wears it in a Prince Valiant cut. Kingsley was born in Gastonia, North Carolina, and she has an attentiveness to emphasis and cadence that you sometimes hear in the voices of Southerners who no longer live in the South but are trying to hold on to their accents. There is intelligence and humor in her voice—"So when ah you comin' out to do me in?" she asked me when I was making plans to visit her in Los Angeles—but with the slightest change of emphasis her voice becomes hard, and once you have felt the steel in it you're always aware of the steel, even when she is being charming. It is a good voice for saying no in, which is useful, because Kingsley says no a lot.

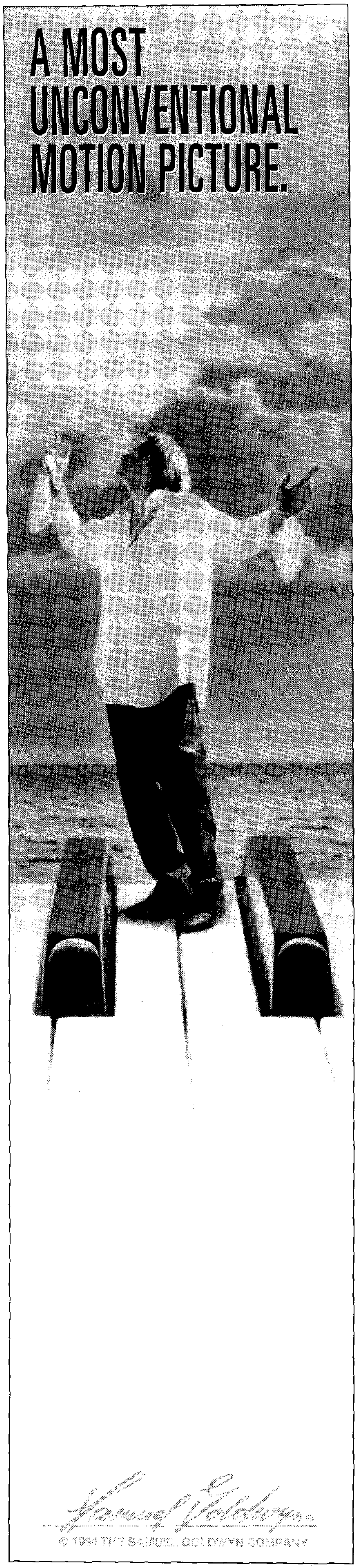
Kingsley is one of three partners in the firm PMK, which is the most powerful of the independent publicity firms, or what *Variety* calls the indie boutiques. She and a staff of eighteen work in a low, Italianate building near West Hollywood, in a pleasant and leafy part of Los Angeles; the two other partners in PMK, Lois Smith and Leslee Dart, with a staff of sixteen, work in New York. Kingsley is not the only publicist who handles big movie stars, but she handles more of them than anyone else. Tom Cruise, Sharon Stone, Richard Gere, Jodie Foster, Al Pacino, Goldie Hawn, Holly Hunter, Candice Bergen, Demi Moore, and Roseanne Arnold are among her clients. (Lois Smith represents Michelle Pfeiffer, Robert Redford, and Emma Thompson, among others, and Leslee Dart's list includes Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington.) Protection is the most important service that Kingsley provides these people.



Kingsley says no to people who don't hear the word very often.

ROBERT RISKO

In the old days, when the stars were long-term employees of the studios, a studio could use its economic power to suppress a story that might damage a star's reputation, or, if the studio couldn't stop the story, to make sure it was confined to a notorious tabloid that had little credibility. Now that the stars are freelancers, the studios don't have the financial incentive to offer that kind


A MOST UNCONVENTIONAL MOTION PICTURE.
Samuel Goldwyn
© 1994 THE SAMUEL GOLDWYN COMPANY

of protection. At the same time, the line between tabloids and respectable publications has blurred, so that stars have to worry about the likelihood that damaging gossip will appear in many more outlets than before. It is this anxiety that Pat Kingsley works to relieve. "With Pat," Sally Field once told the Los Angeles *Times*, "a sort of safeness came over me I'd never felt before."

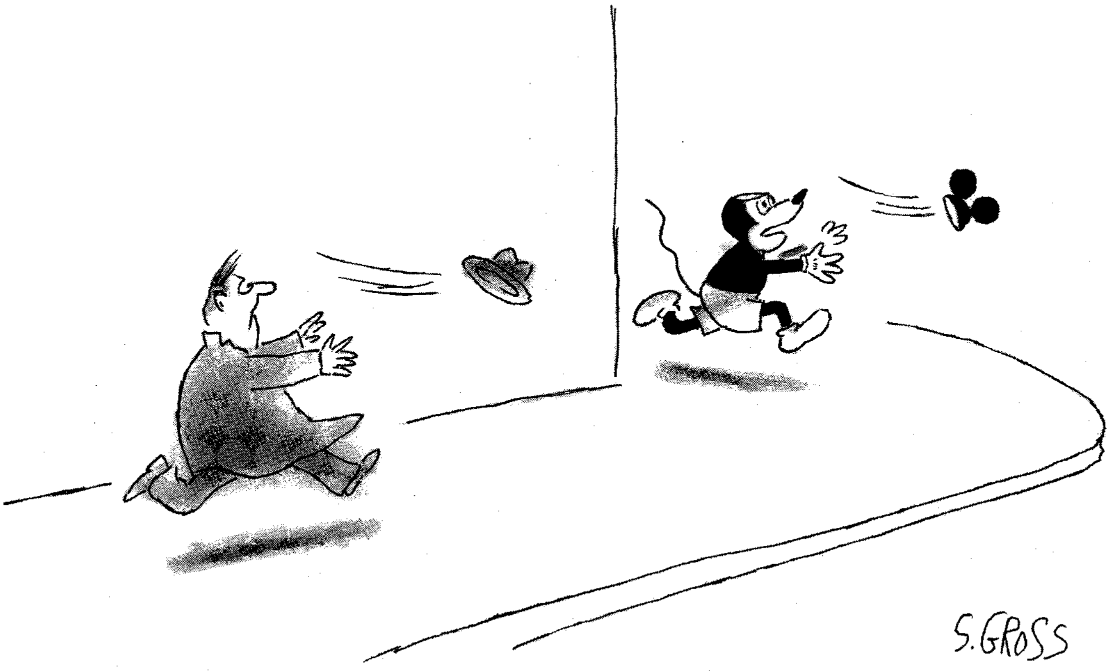
In a reception area down the hall from Kingsley's office is an old photograph of Louis B. Mayer, looking happy and fatherly, with all the M-G-M stars arrayed around him, looking happy and safe under his care. Part of the protective feeling you get from that photograph is preserved and cherished at PMK. If you are Jodie Foster and you're doing the "Today" show and you want to make sure that Bryant Gumbel doesn't ask about John Hinckley, Jr., you call for an artillery strike by Pat Kingsley in advance. (If you're Bryant Gumbel, you go ahead and ask anyway.) On the other hand, if you are a guest of Jay Leno's, and you're boring and unfunny, it's part of Pat Kingsley's job to go up to you afterward and say how fabulous you were. "I have two personalities," Kingsley told me. "One with clients, and another with the press. You really are there to serve the clients' needs. You have to be soft with them." In her dealings with the press, Kingsley has a different personality, which is not so soft.

People whose livelihood depends in one way or another on access to Kingsley's clients sometimes complain that she is too protective. Her efforts on behalf of Tom Cruise have succeeded in making Cruise almost completely inaccessible to the press, and at times even to the people Cruise works for. The standard contract that an actor signs with a studio says that the actor is obliged to do "reasonable publicity" to help promote the film. Once a studio has paid Cruise more than ten million dollars to make a movie, it naturally feels that it's reasonable to ask him to help promote it, and is surprised to hear from Pat Kingsley that this is in fact not reasonable. Recently, in an effort to gain more leverage with its stars, Walt Disney Studios has been working on new contracts that would spell out the publicity the star has to do, and would withhold a portion of the star's fee until it is done. Studio publicists sometimes have to call on studio executives to negotiate with Kingsley or, if possible, to go around Kingsley and appeal directly to the star. A studio executive at Disney said about making a movie with one of Kingsley's clients, "You have to make friends with Pat Kingsley very early in the process."

ON the walls of Kingsley's office are a picture of Tom Cruise and Kingsley together, and a picture of Jodie Foster, and a picture of Lily Tomlin. Foster and Tomlin are friends as well as clients of Kingsley's; Tomlin used to call her regularly during the intermission of "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe," her one-woman Broadway show, to talk about how the performance was going, or anything else that was on her mind. "Pat would look at her watch and say, 'I've got to get back to the office for Lily's call,' " someone who used to work for Kingsley says. Kingsley is also friends with Candice Bergen, whom she has represented since 1966, and with Sally Field and Teri Garr. "Pat's a real person, and she's willing to say, 'Hey, Candy Bergen is a real person,' " Garr told me. " 'Let's not treat her like a bimbo,' which, as we know, is how actresses often get treated. She makes people be fair. For a long time, the media weren't fair to actresses, and she makes them be fair."

Kingsley's desk is an old blackjack table, covered with green felt. It has a cutout part where the dealer used to stand, and Kingsley is often to be found standing there. On the day I visited her, the room was jammed with Christmas gifts from clients: I had to move a cellophane-wrapped wicker basket of wine and gourmet foods from Jodie Foster in order to make space for myself on the couch. Picking up a telephone message from a stack on her desk, Kingsley called out through her office door for her assistant, Ginny Rankin, to dial a number. Kingsley was wearing a telephone headset with a long cord attached to it, and her hair fell across her face. When the call went through, Kingsley said, "Hello, is she there?" That is how she usually starts telephone conversations: the sound of her voice is her introduction. "It's Pat Kingsley."

"Is it fact-checked?" Kingsley said into the phone while examining the contents of a folder and then hunting for something under a stack of papers. Her habit of looking for things while she's talking on the phone gives her voice a vaguely unsettling quality: you feel a little as if she were hunting you. "Well, would they fact-check



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with me, please?" she said into the phone, and went on, "I liked the cover. And I thought the Richard story was fine. I loved the picture inside. It would make a great jigsaw puzzle. . . . Yes, they always do that. Now, I think it's time to start thinking about doing a Johnny Depp cover. I talked to Graydon and he thinks I'm right. . . . Well, ask him."

Catherine Olim, one of Kingsley's colleagues, came into her office with a report on Holly Hunter's Oscar campaign, which PMK, as Hunter's publicist, is handling. Oscar campaigns are a very publicity-sensitive enterprise: the trick is to get as much publicity as possible for the client's performance without appearing to be campaigning for the award. "Holly is winning everything, and we have to hold her back," Kingsley told Olim. "Because people will say, 'It's enough.' I don't want her to be seen as campaigning to win it. She'll get some publicity for these awards, and that's natural, but we can't have her looking like she's going for it. It's a very fine line you have to walk."

"Lily Tomlin on eight," Ginny said, from outside.

"Tell her I'll call her back."

Kingsley spends a lot more time squelching publicity about her top clients than cultivating it. Occasionally, she offers access to one of her big stars in return for a story about a lesser-known talent, but this aspect of her job—using her A-list stars as shills for the B-list stars—is not one she is eager to talk about. All the editors of major magazines that use celebrities on the cover hear no from Kingsley on a regular basis. She says no to people who don't hear the word very often. One reason for her reluctance to say yes is that when a damaging story about a star appears the publicist is generally the first person to get fired. Julia Roberts, during her publicity troubles, fired Susan Geller, hired Kingsley, fired Kingsley, and hired Nancy Seltzer. "We are the last to get hired and the first to get fired," Kingsley told me in a patient and sympathetic tone. "You try to be careful, but things go wrong, and they want to kill the messenger, and I understand the need to do that."

An editor at an entertainment magazine, speaking of top publicists generally, told me recently, "I think their great mission in life is not to get fired. . . . In

ABOUT
A MOST
UNUSUAL MAN.
Samuel Goldwyn

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COLLABORATIONS

TERRY GEORGE ON JIM SHERIDAN

COLLABORATING with the Irish director Jim Sheridan on the script of "In the Name of the Father" meant abandoning all formal scriptwriting procedures. There was no orderly progression from draft to draft; instead, there was a long gestation period of discussion followed by a flurry of writing and then months of fine-tuning.

In March of 1992, I faxed Sheridan a fifty-page treatment based on Gerry Conlon's autobiography, "Proved Innocent." He called to say that Guiseppe Conlon's turbulent relationship with his accused son and their wrongful imprisonment for an I.R.A. bombing was a universal story—Orpheus in the Underworld, Geppetto in the belly of the whale, Jesus on the Cross. He wanted to make the movie, but first we had to write the script together. "I have to have it in my head," he said.

He flew to New York a few days later, and we worked out a basic battle plan: I'd defend the real story, and he'd argue for the drama. Throughout this discussion phase, I fixated on the interrogation scenes in the English police station. It seemed almost impossible to convey in five screen minutes the combination of solitude and fear that would bring an innocent man to sign away the better part of his life.

In mid-August of 1992, I locked myself in a room in Hollywood and began writing. Sheridan joined me a week later, and we had a finished script in six days. A few moments seemed to work particularly well on paper. The core of the story, the father-son relationship, built toward the climactic encounter at Guiseppe Conlon's deathbed. We wrote those scenes as they happened. Guiseppe became mortally ill and was taken to an outside hospital. Gerry was escorted there from the prison in the dead of night and passed through corridors lined with armed policemen to a crowded room where his father lay gasping for breath. "My death will clear your name," Guiseppe Conlon told his son. "Then you clear mine." People wept when they read the scene.

Principal photography began in March, 1993. Three weeks into filming, we still hadn't cracked the problems of the interrogation dialogue. Sheridan prepared to shoot the scene; I paced the floor. "Don't worry about it," he said. "I have it in my head, and Daniel will get it." He crammed the camera into a tiny cellar. Actors swirled around Daniel Day-Lewis. Sheridan pulled them in and out of frame. It was a confusion of images. I hadn't a clue to what was going on.

Toward the end of the shoot, we gathered in an abandoned hospital to film the deathbed scene. By the end of the day, the crew were emotionally drained; people left the set with their faces lined with tear tracks. We viewed the rushes a couple of days later, and Sheridan and I knew instantly that the emotional devastation of the deathbed encounter unbalanced the whole story. He ditched the scene.

Around the same time, Sheridan sat in the editing room with the film's editor, Gerry Hambling, and went over the mishmash of images from the interrogation scene. They put together a sequence around Day-Lewis's gut-wrenching performance which perfectly captured Conlon's collapse. Gerry McSorley brilliantly plays the Irish cop who threatens to shoot Conlon's father. His performance is a near-perfect imitation of Sheridan working off the top of his head. ♦

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most cases the stars will be none the wiser if a story never happens, so the publicists can just say, 'No, he's out of town that week,' whereas if the story does run, even if it's favorable the star might get upset because his nose looks too big, or because the story runs after a story about a guy who grows potatoes in the shapes of Presidents. It's so unpredictable, and that's scary for a publicist . . . because if anything bad happens the publicist gets blamed."

Many of the people who deal regularly with Kingsley admire her intelligence and her tenacity, even though they are often on the losing end of arguments with her. But saying no so often means that a significant number of people she talks to each day go away unhappy, and in some cases the unhappiness has spilled over into dislike. "My complaint with Pat is she sometimes says no in a mean way when it doesn't have to be mean," a studio executive told me, and went on, "She can be cruel. She'd better hope she doesn't lose power, because a lot of people are going to be kicking her on the way down." It is hard for other people to appreciate the anger that a magazine writer feels when his concept for a story on Tom Cruise, which will shed light on important, previously unilluminated aspects of American culture, is shot down by Pat Kingsley for having too much edge to it, and when the writer himself, who is actually a serious writer, is treated by Kingsley as just another hack. Some people believe that Kingsley takes pleasure in crushing the pretense out of journalists; this makes journalists afraid of her, and that fear, in turn, is one of the sources of her power.

KINGSLEY is unmarried, and lives quietly by herself in Pacific Palisades. (Her twelve-year marriage to Walter Kingsley ended in divorce in 1978. Their daughter, Janis, who is twenty-five, is now a social worker.) When she goes home, she told me, she watches TV. "Now I watch Court TV," she said. "I stay up till one in the morning watching, because they have these encapsulated reviews. I love anything to do with the court. Because I love smart people. Same reason I love hospitals."

"Because the doctors are smart?"

"Yes."

"Why do you like smart people?"

"Because I never had that kind of education. I never read Shakespeare or the classics. And when I'm with people who have read them I have always felt the lack."

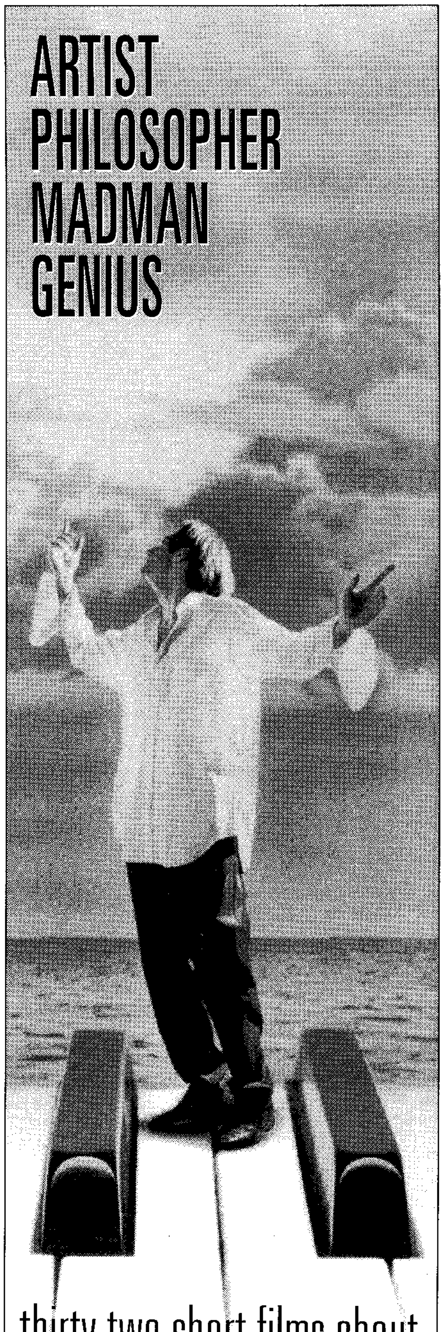
Kingsley's father, Robert Ratchford, was a civilian with the Army quartermaster corps, and during Pat's childhood the family moved from town to town throughout the South; sometimes she'd go to three schools a year. She learned to like sports, because they were something she and her father could talk about. "That was all we talked about," Kingsley told me. "Baseball, basketball, football. I knew all the batting averages. We listened to the Army games." (One of her first jobs as a press agent was to go to Los Angeles Dodgers games with Doris Day, who had season tickets.) She attended Winthrop College, in South Carolina, for a couple of years, but didn't graduate. "I had no ambition," she told me. "My plan was to get married and have children, and since that didn't happen for me right away, I just wanted to work."

In 1959, she took a job in Los Angeles, as a secretary with Rogers & Cowan, which was among the first independent publicity firms. Warren Cowan, her boss, saw promise in Kingsley and elevated her to the rank of planter. In those days, publicists were called press agents, and press agents who fed items to prominent columnists were called planters. "I'm planting Winchell," a press agent would say. The press agent would trade a behind-the-scenes peek at a star ("Clark Gable has bought a new Daimler") for mention of the star's name in a column written by Louella Parsons, Hedda Hopper, Walter Winchell, or Dorothy Kilgallen. The entertainment press was much more powerful then than it is today. If a press agent made Hedda Hopper mad, she could banish all the press agent's clients from her column. Now the situation is just the reverse: if a journalist displeases Pat Kingsley, he risks being denied access to all PMK clients, which basically means the end of his career as a celebrity journalist. A few years ago, the magazine *Details* ran a cover that PMK didn't authorize, and as a result PMK boycotted *Details* for a year.

Kingsley did not like being a planter. "I don't know," she told me. "I never really went in for the side of the business most people think of when they think of publicity—the gimmicky stuff, the stunts." It was the control of publicity, the making of a long-range strategy and the implementing of it, that interested her most. After about ten years in publicity, Kingsley became interested in running her own firm, and in 1971 she co-founded, with Lois Smith and another partner, a company called Pickwick. Then, in 1980, in an effort to acquire more clout, she merged Pickwick with the firm of Maslansky-Koenigsberg, creating PMK. By 1987, Maslansky had had a stroke and retired; Koenigsberg had become a personal manager; and Lois Smith, who had left Pickwick in 1979, and Leslee Dart had become Kingsley's partners in PMK.

A lot of people become publicists because they like hanging out with celebrities, but Kingsley does not appear to be one of them. "I don't hang out with my clients, because I don't like to hang out that much," she told me. "I don't go to clubs. I don't go to parties, and I don't give them. Clients who prefer that sort of thing would be happier with a man, maybe." She doesn't go shopping with her clients, either, though some publicists do. "When I'm in a big department store, I have to go into one of the changing stalls, put my head between my knees, and concentrate on breathing deeply—I get panicky," she said. Nor has she ever wanted to be a star. "No, no. There is no way I would ever want to be a star. They can't go to restaurants, they can't travel by themselves, they can't go to Disneyland. No. It is not a desirable existence."

Political functions—Kingsley, who is serious about politics by Hollywood standards, describes herself as "very left, almost radical"—are the only public events at which she and her clients appear together socially. Kingsley vets politicians, and if she likes what she hears she will ask some of her more political clients to help promote their causes. Francis O'Brien, a former Dukakis adviser, has said that when Kingsley decided to support Dukakis in 1987 it was like getting the Hollywood equivalent of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. In the early eighties, Kingsley worked hard for Helen Caldicott, who was a leader of the antinuclear movement, and she managed to get Caldicott



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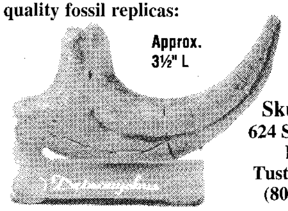

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on "Merv Griffin," "Donahue," and "60 Minutes." In 1988, Kingsley and Teri Garr got arrested for trespassing at a nuclear-weapons test site in Nevada. Kingsley told me that one of her biggest moments as a publicist came in 1981, when she handled Billie Jean King's announcement that she had had a lesbian relationship: "There were all these macho camera guys around, and when Billie Jean finished speaking they all started applauding. It didn't save any of her endorsements, but it was a big moment for me."

One of the most unusual aspects of Kingsley's career as a publicist is that she has chosen to remain one. Publicity has traditionally been a good place to learn about the entertainment industry before moving on to become an agent or a manager or a studio executive. Because publicists are paid a monthly retainer—in Kingsley's case, about three thousand dollars to represent an individual, and from about seven thousand to ten thousand dollars to promote a film—they don't make as much money as agents or managers, who are paid a percentage; that is one reason that publicity has traditionally been a job for women. (PMK's total annual revenue is about five million dollars.) Kingsley has had opportunities to become an agent. Three years ago, when a group of women left the William Morris Agency for I.C.M., and William Morris was taking some heat for being too much of a boys' club, it offered to buy PMK and turn all the publicists into agents, but Kingsley and her partners rejected the offer. When I expressed puzzlement over the fact that she would choose to remain a publicist, Kingsley said, "I couldn't do anything as well." She also gave a further explanation of why she couldn't be an agent: "If I felt someone was right for a part, I couldn't stand being told I was wrong. Also, sometimes you have two clients up for the same part, and I couldn't bear that."

OUTSIDE Kingsley's office, lining the walls of a corridor that leads to a sitting room, are dozens of framed magazine covers with the faces of PMK clients on them, hung in a way that suggests stuffed antelope and moose heads in a hunting lodge. I was impressed, while studying covers from *Vanity Fair*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, *GQ*, *Vogue*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Premiere*, by how detached the cover of a magazine has tended to become from its editorial content. The cover has turned into a kind of wrapping that is neither exactly advertising nor exactly news. Earlier in her career, Kingsley would get very excited when a client made the cover of *Time* or *Newsweek*—"It was like winning the Oscar," she told me—but now, with so many magazines doing celebrity covers, getting on *Time* or *Newsweek* isn't quite so much of a thrill.

Kingsley has played a historic role in the complex relationship between Hollywood and the press. She was probably the first publicist to ask a magazine editor, "Why do *you* always get to decide who's on your cover?" Other publicists may have fantasized about asking this question, or practiced asking it in front of a mirror, but Pat Kingsley was the first one to come right out and ask it, in her characteristic manner, which is both aggressive and demure. She asked the question in 1990 and, having been given no satisfactory reason that she shouldn't decide, she now has almost as much control over magazine covers featuring her clients as the magazines' editors. In fact, when she talks about this aspect of her job she sounds strikingly like a magazine editor: "The fun is putting the actor together with the right writer and the right photographer and the right concept and making it work. You try to get an interesting piece together and then make it happen. You can't always make things work out, but when you do it's great."

It is not so much that Kingsley has forced the magazine industry to surrender control of its covers as that she has cleverly occupied and settled territory that was abandoned by the industry in its pursuit of celebrities. Because celebrities have become so valuable as a way of selling magazines, and because so many magazines now use celebrity covers, editors have to trade more to get a big star, and publicists have to give less. "You know that there are some stars, like Tom Cruise, whose face will sell *x* number of issues," says Susan Lyne, the editor of *Premiere*, "and you want to get them on your cover, because you have to have the newsstand sales. You know that and they know that." Landon Jones, the managing editor of *People*, says, "One problem we at *People* face in a seller's market is that, while we can stand on principle and say, 'No, we won't allow you photo approval,' or whatever, someone like Pat Kingsley can always go to another magazine who will."

Each cover on PMK's walls represents a series of negotiations between the publicists and the editors about the cover photograph, the photographer, the cover concept, the timing of the story, the writer, the access that the writer has to the star and to other sources, and the questions that the writer may ask the star. A particularly important aspect of the negotiations that Kingsley conducts with the press is who will control the rights to an image after its initial publication. One way freelance photographers and writers earn extra money is by reselling their stories and photographs in Europe or Asia. Occasionally, the images find their way into the tabloid press, or they may show up on the cover of one of the women's magazines. All journalists who wanted to interview Tom Cruise at the press junket for "Far and Away," in 1992, had to sign contracts saying, in essence, that control of the words and images—the intellectual property—was held not by the journalists but by PMK. (This gambit provoked a loud outcry from the press, but Kingsley was unrepentant: she did it again with "A Few Good Men.")

At the other end of the corridor lined with framed covers is a room where cover-story interviews are sometimes consummated, and Kingsley and I sat there and talked about the relationship between publicists and the press. It is a sunny room, with flowered sofas at right angles to each other and a jukebox, but a sickly fog of deceit, false pride, anger, vanity, and greed seemed to hang in the air, left over from hundreds of past encounters between writers and celebrities. One of the complaints that writers voice most frequently about Kingsley is that she does not allow them enough access to her clients to enable them to write interesting stories, which has led to a decline in the celebrity feature, a set piece of American journalism practiced by Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Gay Talese, and Tom Wolfe, among others.

"Magazines have traditionally told *us* what to do," Kingsley told me. "You know, 'If you do our cover, you can't do anyone else's cover, and we have to be first,' and all the other rules that a publicist has to listen to. Well, now things are changing a little. The independent publicists have come of age, you might say. I don't have to listen to a bunch of orders from magazine editors anymore. It used to be that magazines sold themselves, but now they use celebrities to sell the magazines—even the fashion magazines are doing it—and that has changed the rules."

During one of my conversations with Kingsley, I asked her, "So, is your attitude the more you can get for your client the better?"

"Well, anyone in business would say that. Lawyers say it—why shouldn't publicists? Sure. You ask. They don't always want to give it to you."

Now, sitting on one of the couches, I asked, "What about freedom of the press?"

"Well, if you mean whether it's important that magazines appear to be objective, yes, I see the value of that. In the old days, you had fan magazines, which people bought in huge numbers, and, of course, *they* weren't 'news.' The publicists and the journalists made it up. But now people expect to read news, and I understand that. But where is it written that the star's life *is* news? Where is it written that stars are public figures? That the press has a right to know? This is their profession. If they were elected officials, I could see it, but why should the public know what their marriage state is, or who they're dating?"

Kingsley paused and held my eyes in her cool, level gaze for several seconds. "Of *course* if we know that the writer has another agenda," she continued in her beautiful voice, "or if we have had a bad experience with a writer, we may say, 'No, thank you, we pass.' " She was letting her voice linger over unlikely syllables, as if she were toying with them to keep herself amused. "Because are we stupid? What are we for?" Again, she paused for a long moment and looked me straight in the eye until the silence became uncomfortable, and I shifted my eyes down to a few hard lines around her mouth. "But I have never asked for quote approval or for copy approval, and no one will believe you when you say that. I don't ask for it because I know I won't get it, and I only ask for what I think I can get." ♦

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SHOUTS AND MURMURS

THE PRICE

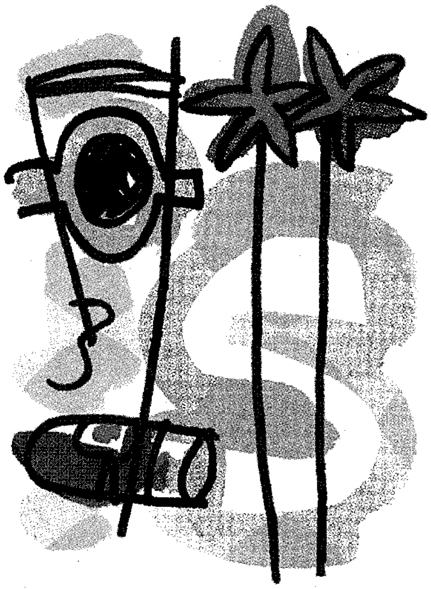
BY ADAM GOPNIK

ANYBODY who spends a little time among Hollywood people quickly discovers something different about their attitude toward money—apart, that is, from their having a lot of it. Instead of the cutthroat sensitivity to the ups and downs of the mass market which you would expect to find, a kind of antimatter economics governs the movie world—an economics in which the market's usual rules seem to be suspended and its terms reversed.

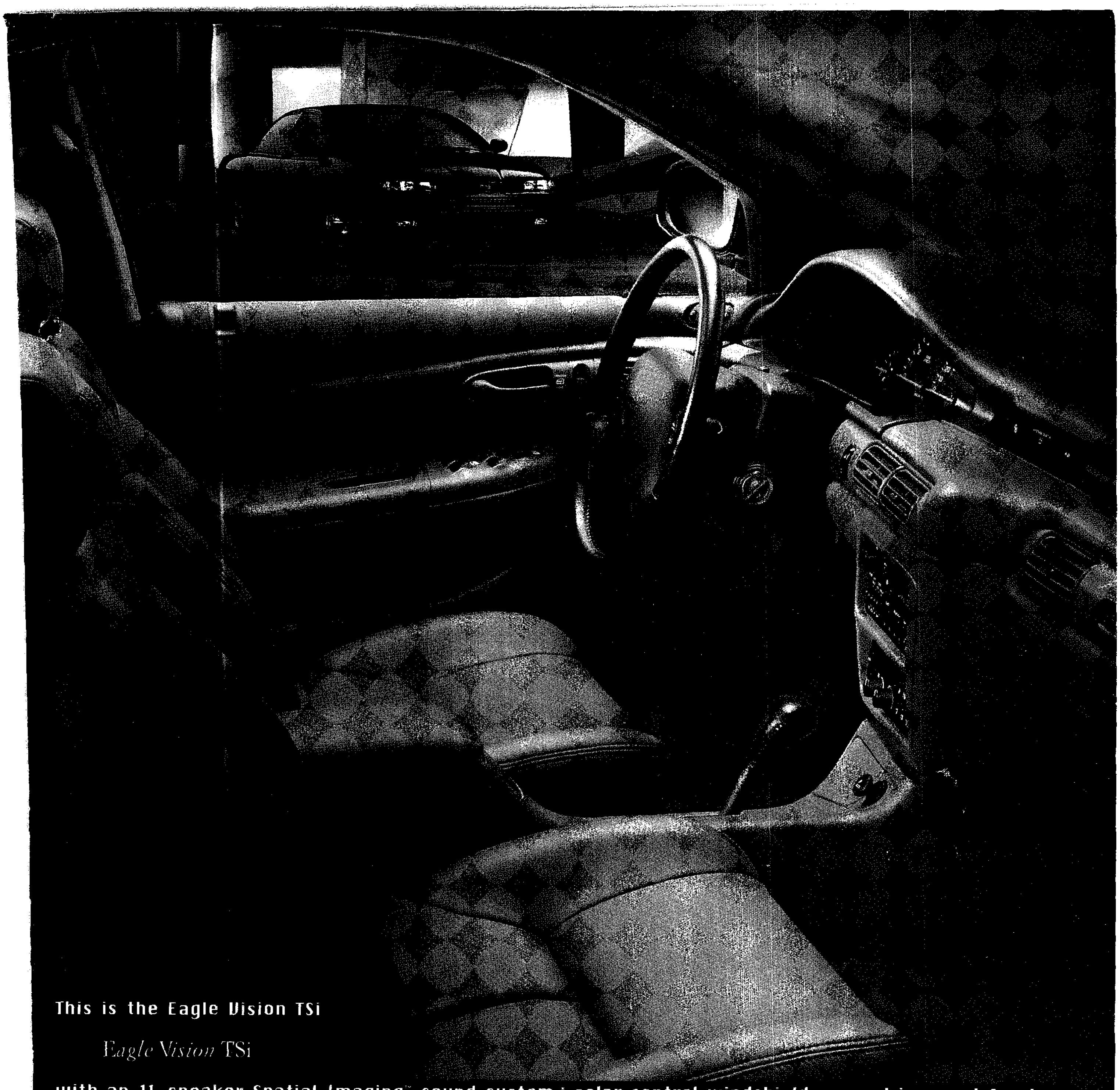
Hollywood people talk a lot about "price," but what they mean by price is not what you and I mean by it. Price in Hollywood is not a fluid number, set by the laws of supply and demand, but a constant, like the speed of light. "That's his price," an agent explains patiently when you ask, hypothetically, why someone couldn't take a little less for a particular project. These prices are, for the most part, kept confidential; even normally loquacious Hollywood people are reluctant to talk about them. When someone's price does sneak out, it is usually startling not just because of the staggering numbers but because of the inability of anyone in the world to justify them. To the naïve observer, there doesn't seem to be much connection between the popularity of a performer and the price he gets. It's hard to see, for example, how the three million dollars that Mickey Rourke reportedly commanded a few years ago had anything to do with the number of people he actually lured into the theatre.

In Hollywood today, there is essentially no predictable relationship between past and future. When the notoriously bankable Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman crashed in flames with "Ishtar," back in 1987, it proved (among other things) the profound truth of William Goldman's Hollywood motto, "Nobody Knows *Anything*." The only part of making a movie that appears to be wholly under control now isn't the bottom-line commercial response (or even the mechanics of selecting a script, a director, and some actors) but the means of its financing. This is why the deal makers, the packagers, are granted not just power but a semi-mythical status. In a time of wildly unpredictable results, there is a weird sense of reassurance and stability in the assembling and spending of huge amounts of up-front money.

The ability to achieve a kind of escape velocity that frees the individual from the normal ups and downs of the market was once thought to belong to a few fabled tycoons—Andrew Carnegie and William Randolph Hearst. Now that ability is perceived to reside in those same deal makers. This is why an old-Hollywood note of magic—of the glamorous and the irrational—is currently attached to the production of movies, but not to the movies themselves. The meaning of Michael Ovitz, if you like—the reason for the extraordinary public attention he gets—is that he is seen to preside over the uncontested divorce of price from the market. Instead of the unseen master producer—a Goldwyn, a Zanuck, a Selznick—who counted not only on the brilliance of his stars or the cunning of a certain script but also on his own innate or imagined perfect understanding of the audience's desires, we have an almost invisible hand that is admired because it is able to do without an audience at all. The cult of Irving Thalberg, in the early nineteen-thirties, sustained the old Hollywood myth by transferring it from the performers to the studio head. That cult was about stardom, with money merely one of the accessories. The Ovitz legend is about money, with stardom merely one of the accessories.



For the most part, the reality of the new Hollywood economics can only be glimpsed in moments—in films such as "Father of the Bride" and "Home Alone," for example, where houses that are clearly worth many millions of dollars, and families with incomes to match, stand in, uncontroversially, for the vanishing American middle class. (In "Home Alone," the reason the Typical American Kid got left home in the first place was that his entire family was taking a plane to Paris for Christmas—a holiday activity not well known among families outside Bel Air.) Of course, such silliness has always been around in the movies. But what seems new about this kind of reality slippage today is that no one in the audience seems to notice or to care much. We're resigned to it now. We seem to have accepted that there are really two economies—one that you live by and one that you look at. ♦



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